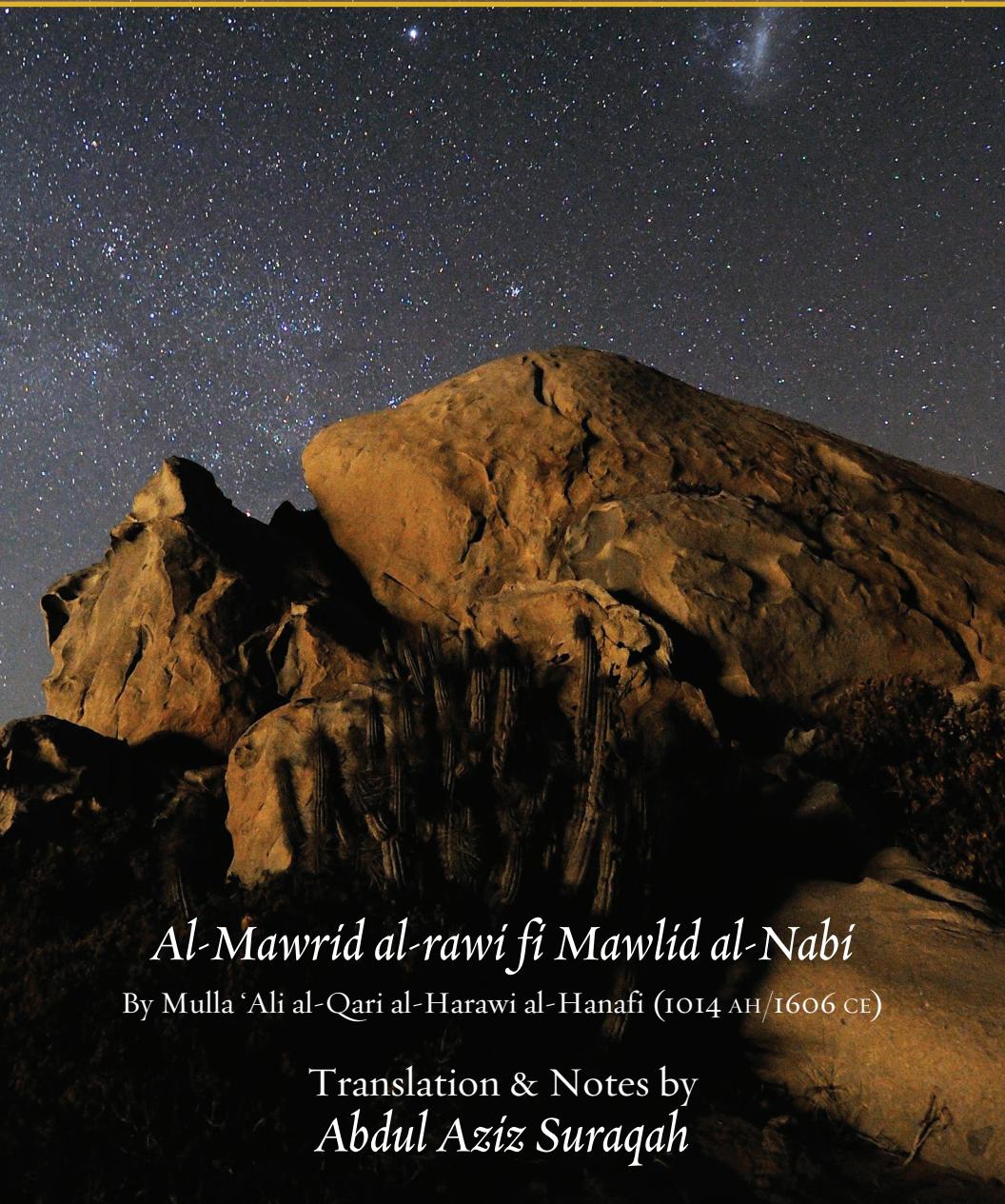


The Quenching Source

On the Birth of the Prophet ﷺ



Al-Mawrid al-rawi fi Mawlid al-Nabi

By Mulla 'Ali al-Qari al-Harawi al-Hanafi (1014 AH/1606 CE)

Translation & Notes by
Abdul Aziz Suraqah

THE QUENCHING SOURCE
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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BIOGRAPHY OF MULLA ‘ALI AL-QARI

He is Shaykh ‘Ali b. Sultan Muhammad al-Qari, better known as Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari—“the reciter”—on account of his mastery of the variant Quranic readings (*qira’at*), and because he would write out one Quranic script (*mushaf*) each year in one of the readings and sell it and use the proceeds to provide for himself during his studies. He was born in Herat, Afghanistan, where he sought sacred knowledge as a young man. Thereafter, he travelled to Mecca and studied under some of the greatest luminaries of his time, including the great Shafi’i authority and hadith master Shaykh Ahmad b. Hajar al-Haytami and Qutb al-Din al-Hanafi.

Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari was a master of hadith, law, theology, variant Quranic readings, and other sciences. His famous works include a commentary on Qadi ‘Iyad’s *al-Shifa*, a commentary on al-Tibrizi’s hadith compilation *Mishkat al-masabih*, a commentary on Imam al-Ghazali’s abridgement of his *Ihya ‘ulum al-din*, a three volume exegesis of the Quran, a commentary on Imam al-Jazari’s prayer manual *al-Hisn al-hasin*, a biography of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, a compendium of hadith forgeries, a commentary on Imam Abu Hanifa’s theological tract *al-Fiqh al-akbar*, a commentary on the *Burda Ode* of Imam al-Busiri, a commentary on Imam al-Tirmidhi’s *Shama’il*, this work *al-Mawrid al-rawai fi Mawlid al-Nabi*, and several other works, many of which are still in manuscript form.

He continued to live, write, and teach in Mecca, and died there in the year 1014 AH/1606 CE—Allah have mercy upon him.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

Abdul Aziz Suraqah was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, where at the age of fourteen he embraced Islam. As a teenager, he began learning Arabic and later studied sacred knowledge in Yemen, Mauritania and Morocco, with a focus on theology (*aqida*), legal theory (*usul*), Arabic grammar, rhetoric, and literature. Since 1998, he has been teaching Arabic and Islamic studies to adults and youth alike, and in 2005 he began translating Islamic texts from Arabic to English full time. To date he has completed over fifty works. He currently runs Ibriz Media, where he continues to translate, edit, and work on projects for scholars, Islamic educational institutions, organizations, and private clients.

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ALL praises belong to Allah, the Eternal and Everlasting, for illuminating us with the Ahmadan light (*Nur*) and the noblest Muhammadan radiance (*Diya*) that is described as the praiseworthy (*Mahmud*) in the created realm. He has bestowed both Arab and non-Arab peoples with all types of bounties and myriad gifts. Allah has sent him as a guide for and a gift to all of humanity, and as a mercy and clemency. Allah is certainly the Most Merciful and the Loving for having brought out this *mawlid* [one born] in the best of times, the month of Rabi' al-Awwal (as is established), and for having honored him, ennobled him, blessed him, brought him close, and chosen him for Himself (Allah bless him and give him peace). One of the people of spiritual states excelled when he said:

*In Islam this month has a virtue
And a feature above all other months
The one born herein has a name and meaning
And signs that were clearly manifest
A spring in a spring in a spring
And a light above light above light*

ON THE PROPHET (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)
BEING SENT AS A MERCY TO THE BELIEVERS AND AS A PROOF
AGAINST THE IDOLATERS

Allah Most High said in the Mighty Quran and Wise Criterion: "Certainly, there has come to you a Messenger from your own selves. It grieves him that you suffer, and he is concerned about you and kind and merciful toward the believers." (9:128–129) Allah prefaced this verse (which entails the obtainment of lights) with an estimated oath and emphasis, using

the particle of actualization [*harf al-tahqiq*.]¹ This indicates that the Prophet's arrival (Allah bless him and give him peace) to them was a sign of divine solicitude and success. The address in the verse is general and includes both believers and disbelievers; however, it is a form of guidance for the god-fearing and a proof against the others—just as the Nile was a source of water for those who were loved but a source of blood for those who were veiled [during the time of Musa]. This verse indicates that the Prophet's arrival (Allah bless him and give him peace) was promised and known, and is based on the words of Allah: “*So when guidance comes to you from Me, then whoever follows My guidance shall neither fear nor grieve. And those who disbelieve and reject Our signs, they are the denizens of the Fire, abiding therein forever.*” (2:38–39)

The mention of the emphatic and conditional “*in*” when speaking of the Prophet's arrival and accepted appearance is a clear proof and comprehensive sign that it is not obligatory upon Allah Most High to send the Messenger, except in accordance with His promise, generosity, and divine largesse for His servants. This contains a subtle indication and it is as if He is saying, “Had We not sent him to you, his lofty rank would not be diminished, for he is exalted and close to Us.” He (Allah bless him and give him peace) did not prefer turning to and interacting with the creation over being in the Divine Presence. Don't you see how Aban al-Khawwas—one of the servants of Ibrahim al-Khawwas²—turned away from all offers to take over his kingdom and assume lofty positions, and instead turned to the exalted presence [of Allah]? Despite that, however, the Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) interacted with creation and left what he wanted for what Allah

¹ The word at the beginning of the verse, “*laqad*,” contains the particles *lam* and *qad*, both of which are for emphasis [*tawkid*]. Together, the phrase means “I swear by Allah,” and the particle “*qad*” indicates *tahqiq*, or the actualization of what comes after it.

² Ibrahim b. Ahmad b. Isma'il al-Khawwas (d. 291 AH), one of the well-known early Sufi masters and contemporaries of Imam Junayd al-Baghdadi.

Most High chose for him and willed, and that is the way of the *murad* and the *murid* [the one desired and the one who desires]. One of them said:

*I want to be with him and he wants me to stay away
So I leave what I want for what he wants*

This is the rank of the people of perfection among the masters of spiritual states who gather between the theophanies of beauty and divine rigor: those who are annihilated from all “others” besides Him, both what is behind them and what lies ahead. Similarly, when Abu Yazid [al-Bistami]³ was asked, “What do you desire?” he replied, “I desire that I do not desire.” Some of the people of divine grace [tawfiq] among the masters of realization and profundity said, “This is also the meaning of ‘will’ [*irada*] according to the Sufi Masters. That is because the *irada* to have no *irada* is from the realm of increase, alluding to the station of annihilation from everything-other-than-Him, and [acquiring] the states of resignation and contentment with the divine pre-ordination.”

The double enunciation [*tanwin*] in the word [Messenger [*Rasul*]] is for the sake of magnification, which contains an honor. It is as if the Most High said: “Certainly, there has come to you a Messenger from your own selves. He is noble and sent by a Noble Lord and with a Noble Book that invites to rest and repose and gardens of delight, and the additional glad tiding of meeting the Generous. In addition, it warns from the torment of the blazing fire.” Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, said, “*Inform My servants that I am the Oft-Forgiving and Merciful, and inform them that My torment is indeed a painful torment.*” (15:49–50)

³ Tayfur b. ‘Isa al-Bistami (b. 188 AH) one of the famous Sufi masters known for his detachment from the world.

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE PROPHET (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE) OVER THE OTHER PROPHETS

One of the signs of the Messenger's greatness (Allah bless him and give him peace) is that a covenant was taken from the other noble Prophets and honorable Messengers—for the purpose of magnification and exaltation—that whosoever among them was to witness his arrival with the message would believe in him, aid him, and acknowledge his perfection. This was pointed out by the Quranic exegetes in their interpretation of the words of the Most High: *“And [remember] when Allah took the covenant from the Prophets, [saying], ‘Whatever I give you of the Book and the wisdom, and then a Messenger comes to you confirming what is with you, you must believe in him and support him.’”* (3:81)

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was guided to this lofty station, for he said, “If Musa was alive he would have no other choice but to follow me.”⁴ Elsewhere he (Allah bless him and give him peace) indicated this—nay, he indicated a station above this—when he declared: “Adam and those after him are under my banner on the Day of Judgment.”⁵

It is as if the Most High is saying: “Know that he has only come to you in his outward form [*al-qalib al-suri*] and as a manifestation of light, but with his presential heart [*al-qalb al-huduri*] he stands before the door of the Divine Presence and does not leave it for the blinking of an eye. Indeed, he is the gathering point of the two seas [*Majma’ al-bahrayn*] because he is a stranger among you yet close to Us. He is separate from you yet near to Us. With you he is a Qurashi but with Us he is celestial [*‘Arshi*]. His return, however, shall be unto the Divine Presence, even if the period of absence from it is long. This is the state of the Messenger vis-à-vis

⁴ Recorded by Ahmad in his *Musnad* and al-Bazzar in his *Musnad*.

⁵ Recorded by Ahmad in his *Musnad* and al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan*.

the One who sent him after he attains the objective that is cause for arrival.

In this month [of Rabi' al-Awwal] there is both happiness and sadness, leaving the delights of the world and subsistence [*baqa'*] and returning to annihilation [*fana'*]. What is strange is that both of them [the date of the Prophet's birth and his passing (Allah bless him and give him peace)] fall on the same month, which is similar to other amazing historical coincidences, such as the location of Maymuna's marriage [Maymuna b. al-Harith]. She was married in Sarf (an area on the outskirts of Mecca) and a house was built for her there, yet it was also the place where she died and was buried and mourned. Glorified is the Ever-Living (al-Hayy) who will never die or be subject to loss or change. All praises belong to Allah who granted us life through Islam and placed us in the *Umma* of Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) who was the hope of the noble Prophets. His coming (Allah bless him and give him peace) is the completion of bounty and the peak of honor, hence it is incumbent upon us to receive that honor in various times and places.

Out of his pure divine largesse, Allah Most High has combined two tremendous graces for the inhabitants of the two noble places, i.e., the two Sacred Precincts and honored areas [Mecca and Medina]—may Allah increase them in honor, nobility, awe, and esteem—for the blessed birth took place in Mecca the Inviolable, and the magnificent burial place is located in Medina the Tranquil—may the choicest prayers and best salutations be upon its dweller. The inhabitants of each city have done what is appropriate for them to do, and performed beautiful acts that are facilitated for them, such as visiting the birthplace (for the former) and visiting the one born (for the former), and both have gained the ultimate triumph and goal.

CELEBRATION OF THE MAWLID HAS NOT BEEN TRANSMITTED
FROM ANY OF THE SALAF FROM THE FIRST THREE GENERATIONS

The Shaykh of our Shaykhs, the Imam and erudite polymath, Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Sakhawi (may Allah grant him a lofty station) said⁶:

I was among those honored to witness the *Mawlid* celebration in Mecca for years, and I came to know of the many blessings it contains. ... During my time there, I had the chance to visit many times the effulgent birthplace [of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)] and witness the grand displays of celebration. The basis for the noble *Mawlid* celebration was not transmitted from any of the righteous forebears of the first three virtuous generations; rather, it was inaugurated after their time with pious motives and good and sincere intentions. The people of Islam throughout the lands and major metropolises continue to celebrate it during the month of the Prophet's birth—may Allah send salutations and prayers upon him and grant him honor and exaltation—by arranging elaborate meals and gatherings. During its nights they engage in various forms of charitable giving and display happiness and increase in good acts. Indeed, they take advantage of the closeness of the Prophet's birthplace (Allah bless him and give him peace) and every great bounty manifests upon them due to its blessings—and that is tried and true, as Imam Shams al-Din al-Jazari the reciter said: “It is a source of security for the entire year and an early glad tiding for every good thing that is sought after.”

THE CELEBRATION OF THE MAWLID AMONG THE INHABITANTS
OF EGYPT AND THE LEVANT

[al-Sakhawi continued:] The inhabitants of Egypt and the Levant are the keenest of people [when it comes to the celebration of the

⁶ See Abu Shama, *al-Ba’ith ‘ala inkar al-bid’ā wa al-hawadīth*, p. 36.

Mawlid]. The Sultan of Egypt convenes on that night one of the greatest of gatherings. I once attended the *Mawlid* celebration there in the year 785 AH in the fortress of al-Jabal al-‘Aliya in the company of al-Malik al-Muzaffar Barquq (may Allah have mercy upon him). In that celebration, I saw what gladdened me and what saddened me, too. I calculated what he [al-Malik al-Muzaffar] spent that night upon the reciters and those in attendance among the orators, singers, young children and servants, etc., and I estimated it at ten thousand *mithqals* [450 kg] of gold spent on things like royal garments, food, drink, scent, candles, and other provisions. On that night I also counted twenty-five melodious reciters—and it is hoped that they will stay that way. Not a single reciter among them departed until he received around twenty royal garments from the Sultan and other leaders. The rulers of Egypt and the servants of the two Sacred Precincts continue to enjoy the help of Allah in eradicating many evils and iniquities. They have looked after the citizenry as a father looks after his child, and they are renowned for their justice. Allah has aided them with his hosts and succor, such as the felicitous king and martyr al-Zahir Abu Sa‘id Jaqmaq. They are dutiful toward him and follow the path of his Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), and during his time the assemblies of reciters have increased to thirty in number, and they are lauded for their good qualities and sufficed from every need.

HOW DID THE RULERS OF ANDALUSIA CELEBRATE THE MAWLID?

[al-Sakhawi continued:] The rulers of Andalusia and the Maghreb have a night in which the leading scholars and others assemble in mass from every locale; and even the non-believers attend. I believe that the Europeans are also not wont to miss that gathering, since they want to emulate the other kings in their region.

THE CELEBRATIONS IN INDIA

[al-Sakhawi continued:] Some of the verifying scholars have informed me that the celebrations in India surpass those of other lands.

THE CELEBRATIONS OF THE NON-ARABS

[al-Sakhawi continued:] When this esteemed and honored month begins, the non-Arabs [*ajam*] convene huge gatherings with varieties of food that are given to the noble reciters and the poor among the commoners and elite. During these celebrations they complete many recitals of the Quran and engage in continual reading and singing. These celebrations are full of delight and goodness, and even the elderly women among them come together and sing. In their gatherings these elderly women entertain the leaders and elite and they host them at that time to the best of their ability. Their shaykhs and scholars are so keen to celebrate this honored *Mawlid* and noble gathering that no one fails to attend it, in hopes of receiving its light and felicity.

[...]The Shaykh of our Shaykhs, Mawlana Zayn al-Din Mahmud al-Hamadani al-Naqshabandi (may Allah sanctify his lofty secret) mentioned that once, the ruler of his time, Khaqan al-Dawran Hamabun Badshah (may Allah grant him a goodly abode) wanted the Shaykh to visit him so he could obtain spiritual succor, but the Shaykh, sufficing himself with the All-Merciful, turned down the ruler's invitation and refused to let him visit as well. The ruler pleaded with his minister, Bayram Khan, to devise a ruse by which the two could gather in the same place, even if only for a short amount of time. The minister heard that the Shaykh never attended gatherings of happiness or sadness, unless the gathering was a celebration of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace), and that was due to the Shaykh's reverence for the Prophet's station. When news of this reached the Sultan, he

ordered that the necessary preparations be made and arranged various types of food and drink and other items needed for gatherings of sacred knowledge. Then he invited the elite and their families. The Shaykh came with some of his servants, whereupon the Sultan, hoping to gain the Shaykh's gentleness and gaze, humbly took the water-pitcher with his own hands and his minister took the bowl, and they proceeded to wash the Shaykh's noble hands. Due to the blessing of their humbleness for the sake of Allah and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace), the Sultan and his minister gained a tremendous station and noble rank.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE MAWLID AMONG THE INHABITANTS OF MECCA

[al-Sakhawi continued:] During the *Mawlid* celebration, the inhabitants of Mecca—that treasure-store of goodness and blessings—proceed in mass to Suq al-Layl, which is the site most consider to be the location of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace). They head to this site in hopes of obtaining their objectives. Their celebrations on this day exceed their celebrations on the day of Eid, and few are wont to miss it, whether they are righteous or corrupt, mindful or negligent. This is especially true for the Sharif of the Hejaz; however, these days he visits the site at other times.

[...] The munificence of Mecca's judge and scholar, al-Burhani al-Shafi'i, included feeding the visitors, residents, and attendees with the most exquisite foods and sweets. On the morning of the *Mawlid* he would distribute sweets to the people in hopes of having afflictions removed. Al-Burhani's son, al-Jamali, dutifully followed in his father's footsteps and would give to the residents and travelers. As for today, only the smoke from the cooking fire remains, and none of what we mentioned is seen, except as a lingering fragrance of wild thyme. The situation is as some say:

*Their tents are like their tents
But I see that the women are not their women*

THE CELEBRATION OF THE MAWLID BY THE INHABITANTS OF MEDINA

[al-Sakhawi continued:] The inhabitants of Medina—may Allah Most High increase them—celebrate the *Mawlid* with great fervor. Al-Malik al-Muzaffar, may Allah have mercy upon him, used to go to great lengths in his celebration and preparations for it. The erudite Abu Shama, one of al-Nawawi's teachers known for his rectitude, praised al-Muzaffar for this in his book *al-Baith 'ala al-bida' wa al-hawadith* and said: “Actions like this are good and recommended and the one who performs them should be praised and lauded. Ibn al-Jazari added, ‘Even if it only enrages Satan and brings delight to the people of faith.’ Al-Jazari also said, ‘If the people of the cross [i.e., the Christians] took the birth night of their Prophet as a major celebration, the Muslims have even more right to honor [the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)].’ One can, however, retort that we are commanded to be different from the People of the Book, although there does not appear to be an answer to this from the words of the Shaykh.”

That is a rhetorical argument, for the Shaykhs of the Shaykhs of Islam, the Seal of the noble Imams, Abu al-Fadl Ibn Hajar [al-‘Asqalani], the relied upon teacher (may Allah cover him in His mercy and settle him in His expansive gardens) stated that there occurred to him a legal text upon which the gallant scholars can rely. It is the report found in the collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim. It mentions that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) came to Medina and found the Jews fasting on the day of ‘Ashura’. When he asked them concerning this, they replied, “It is the day on which Allah drowned Fir’awn and saved Musa, so we fast this day out of gratitude to Allah Most High.” The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “I have more right to

Musa than you all,” and he fasted on that day and ordered others to fast on it... His first fast coincided with theirs for the sake of drawing them near [to Islam] and then later he did it on a different day to show the differences between them. He [Ibn Hajar] said, “Giving thanks to Allah Most High can be shown by many acts of worship, such as prostration, fasting, charity, or reciting [the Quran]. And what bounty is greater than the blessing of the birth of this Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)—the Prophet of mercy—on this day?”

(end of quote from Imam al-Sakhawi)



I [Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari] say: The verse “*Certainly, there has come to you a Messenger...*” alludes to this and indicates that the time of his appearance should be celebrated with reverence. Ibn Hajar continued: “As for what is done in the *Mawlid*, it should be confined to what expresses gratitude to Allah Most High, such as the aforementioned practices such as reciting the *Quran*, feeding others, giving charity, and singing something of the odes that praise the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and encourage renunciation [*zuhd*], and songs that move the heart and encourage it to do good deeds and work for the Hereafter. As for what is added to this, such as singing and amusement and the like, what should be said concerning it is that the permissible therein that expresses joy over the day is of no harm if joined with it, while the unlawful, disliked, or offensive [*khilaf al-awla*] is forbidden [*yumna*].”

Now, this also applies to areas wherein there are differences of opinion [*khilaf*]. Indeed, we should be committed to doing deeds of excellence every day and night of the month, as was reported from Ibn Jama‘a, who hoped to do that. It has reached us that when the ascetic and devout exemplar, Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Abd al-Rahim b. Ibrahim b. Jama‘a, was in the city of the

Prophet—may prayers and pure salutations be upon its resident—he would prepare food for the *Mawlid* celebration and proclaim, “If only I was able, I would hold a *Mawlid* celebration day of the month.” I say: So since I am unable to host people for the *Mawlid* celebration physically, I have written these pages in order that they may host people metaphorically and with light for all times to come—without restriction to a particular year or month. I have named this work *al-Mawrid al-rawi fi Mawlid al-Nabi* (*The Quenching Source concerning the Birth of the Prophet—Allah bless him and give him peace*)

WHAT SHOULD BE READ DURING THE MAWLID CELEBRATION?

As for what is read during the *Mawlid*, it should be confined to the narrations reported by the *hadith* masters in the compilations that are either specific to it, such as *al-Mawrid al-hani*⁷, or general, such as al-Bayhaqi’s *Dala’il al-Nubuwwa*. There is similarly no problem reading Ibn Rajab’s *Lata’if al-ma’arif* during the *Mawlid*. This is because the majority of the content repeated by the sermonizers is either completely spurious or interwoven with spurious reports, and they continue to relate reprehensible and odious narrations that are forbidden to narrate or listen to. In fact, if one knows that these narrations are false, it is incumbent upon him to censure them and enjoin others to eschew them. It is not necessary to read such things during the *Mawlid* celebration; rather, it is sufficient to recite the *Quran*, feed others, give charity, and sing something of the odes that praise the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and encourage non-attachment to the world [*zuhd*], and sing songs that move the heart and encourage it to do good deeds and work for the Hereafter. May prayers and salutations be upon the one born on the *Mawlid*!

⁷ A *mawlid* text by al-Hafiz Zayn al-Din al-‘Iraqi (d. 806 AH).

WHEN WAS THE PROPHET CREATED?

You should know that the statement of the Most High “*Certainly there has come to you a Messenger from your own selves*”—i.e., a man who is described with the quality of prophecy and messengership and identified with the traits of majesty and nobility—alludes either to the Prophet’s perfections when his time came and his beauty manifested, or it alludes to his statement “I was a Prophet when Adam was between water and clay.” Some *hadith* masters say that they have not located this report, but its meaning has been reported in several authentic routes of transmission. One of them, narrated by Ahmad, al-Bayhaqi, and al-Hakim (the latter of whom said, “Its chain is rigorously authentic”) from ‘Irbad b. Sariya, relates that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “With Allah I was written as the Seal of the Prophets when Adam was still bound in his clay.” This means when Adam was still bound to his clay on the earth before his soul was blown into it. Another report was narrated by Ahmad, al-Bukhari in his *al-Tarîkh [al-kabîr]*, Abu Nu’aym in *al-Hilya*, and authenticated by al-Hakim, from Maysara al-Dabi, who said, “I asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah! When were you a Prophet?’ He (Allah bless him and give him peace) replied, ‘When Adam was between spirit and body.’” Another narration of this reads, “I was written...” There is also a report from al-Tirmidhi that he declared authentic via Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him). The Companions asked, “O Messenger of Allah! When was prophecy made incumbent upon you?” The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) replied, “When Adam was between spirit and body.”

One report [in Abu Nu’aym’s *Dala’il al-Nubuwâ*] reads, “I am the first Prophet created and the last of them sent.” In *Sahîh Muslim* there appears a *hadîth* from ‘Amr b. al-‘As in which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “Indeed, Allah wrote the decrees of the creation fifty-thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth, ‘*and His Throne was upon the water*.’”

[Also] from what is written in the *Mother of the Books* [the Preserved Tablet] is the statement: “Muhammad is the Seal of the Prophets.” This entails that his prophecy was made manifest to the angels drawn near, and that his soul was in the loftiest station to demonstrate his tremendous nobility of rank and distinction from the other Prophet and Messengers. Furthermore, the Prophet’s manifestation was when Adam was between soul and body, and that is because it is the time in which the souls enter the physical realm, and so he (Allah bless him and give him peace) was distinguished from the progeny and children from the fathers and grandfathers.

IMAM AL-GHAZALI SPEAKS ABOUT THE PROPHET’S CREATION (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

In his book *al-Nafkh wa al-Taswīya*⁸, the Imam and Proof of Islam discussed in detail the Prophet’s description of himself having prophecy and perfected traits before his [physical] existence. Al-Ghazali maintained that what is meant by “creation” [in these *hadith* reports] is the divine decree, and not creation as such, for the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was not created or brought into physical being before his mother carried him in her womb. That said, the Prophet’s paragons of perfection were pre-ordained and with him after his creation. Al-Ghazali said:

This is the meaning of their statement, “The beginning of thought is the end of action, and the end of action is the beginning of thought.” Therefore, the Prophet’s statement “I was a Prophet...” refers to the divine decree before the creation of Adam; for Adam was not made

⁸ Other scholars, such as al-Shaykh al-Akbar Ibn ‘Arabi and Ibn Tufayl, have stated that this work is not by Imam al-Ghazali. Ibn ‘Arabi said that it is the work of Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali al-Musaffir al-Sibti whom he met and knew first hand (*Muhadarat al-abrar*, p. 125).

save that Muhammad should come from his progeny (Allah bless him and give him peace). In sum, when an engineer thinks of a house, he sees it as a mental existence and a means to and preceding its external existence. Allah Most High decrees something and then brings it into existence accordingly.

IMAM AL-SUBKI SPEAKS ABOUT THE CREATION OF THE PROPHET'S SOUL (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

Al-Subki on the other hand adopted a position that is better and clearer. He said:

The souls were created before the physical bodies, therefore the statement [in the *hadith*] “I was a Prophet...” alludes to his noble soul, or it points to a reality among its realities unknown to all but Allah or those whom He has blessed to be acquainted with it. Allah Most High can manifest whatever realities He wills at the time of His choosing. The Prophet’s reality can be from the time of Adam’s creation, and Allah could have given it its qualities and created it in a readied state and poured upon it from that moment, making him a Prophet. Allah wrote the Prophet’s name on the Throne in order to make the Prophet’s special rank in His sight known to His angels and others. His reality (Allah bless him and give him peace) was present starting at that time even though his blessed physical body described with those perfections was yet to come. When [the two (his soul and physical body) came together] he was given prophecy, wisdom, and the other qualities of his reality. The Prophet’s perfections were all granted to him in [his] beginning, and none of them was deferred [until his physical birth]; the only thing deferred was his physical

formation and movement from his ancestors' purified loins and wombs until he appeared in the most complete sense (Allah bless him and give him peace). As for the one who interprets this as Allah knowing that he would become a Prophet, such a person has yet to understand the meaning of what we have expressed. That is because Allah's knowledge (exalted is He) encompasses all things, so his description as a Prophet should be understood as something that is fixed, for otherwise he would not be unique because in Allah's knowledge, all of the Prophets are like that.

IMAM AL-QASTALANI SPEAKS ABOUT THE MUHAMMADAN REALITY (*AL-HAQIQA AL-MUHAMMADIYYA*)

Al-Qastalani said:

When the will of the Real [Allah], exalted is He, was linked to His creation of the contingent beings and the apportioning of their sustenance, He manifested the Muhammadan Reality from the pre- eternal divine lights in the Presence of Pure Unicity [*al-Hadra al-Ahadīya*], and then He extracted from this reality the celestial and lower realms in the form of His divine rulings as they were in His pre- eternal will and knowledge. After that, Allah informed him [the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)] of his prophecy and gave him the tidings of his prophetic message. During all of this, Adam was—as the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said—“between spirit and body.” Then the individual souls sprung forth from him (Allah bless him and give him peace) and he was made manifest in the Loftiest Assembly [*al-mala’ al-a’la*] in the noblest of manifestations, and they [the souls] enjoyed the most wonderful

providence. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is the most valuable prototype and the father of all people and existents. When [Allah's name] the Hidden (al-Batin) finished with the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), the ruling of Allah's name the Manifest (al-Zahir) took effect and his physical body was connected to his soul—and thus Muhammad appeared (Allah bless him and give him peace).

Although his physical form came later, the Prophet's resplendent rank was known, for he is the treasure-store of divine mysteries and the locus of the divine command. Thus, no command is carried out save through him, and no good is transmitted save that it originates with him.

*He who was a king and master
When Adam was between water and clay
He is the Messenger Muhammad, the Abtahi [of Mecca]
To him belong honor and glory in the celestial realm
He appeared felicitous in the final days
With recorded stances in every epoch
If he commands, there is none to oppose
And nothing in the cosmos to overturn it!*

WHY IS THE PROPHET (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE) PREEMINENT OVER THE OTHER PROPHETS?

We reported a narration in a volume from the *Amalī* of Abu Sahl al-Qattan via Sahl b. Salih al-Hamdani who said, “I asked Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. ‘Ali how Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) came before the other Prophets when he was the last of them sent. He replied, ‘When Allah Most High took from the loins of the sons of Adam their descendants and made them testify to “Am I not your Lord?” Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) was the first of them to reply “Yes.”’”

Ibn Sa'd narrated from al-Sha'bi: "When were you first a Prophet, O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet replied, "When Adam was between soul and body as the covenant was taken."

This proves that Muhammad was extracted from Adam when the latter was formed of clay, and it was during that time when he was made a Prophet and had the covenant taken from him. After that, the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was returned to Adam's loins until the time he was to be brought into physical existence. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) was the first of them created. The creation of Adam that took place before that was still a non-life since it had no soul in it, but the Prophet was living when he was extracted from his [loins], made a Prophet, and given the covenant. He is, therefore, the first Prophet created and the last of them sent. This does not conflict with the fact that Adam's descendants were taken from him after the soul was blown into him, because the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was set apart and distinguished from the rest of the children of Adam by being the first one taken out. In al-'Imad Ibn Kathir's exegesis of Allah's words, "*And [remember] when Allah took the covenant from the Prophets,*" (3:80) he reported from 'Ali and Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that "Allah did not send a single Prophet save that He took a covenant from him regarding Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace), that if Muhammad is sent while he is alive that he will believe in him and assist him and take a similar covenant from his own people."

Al-Subki inferred from this verse that even though the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) came in his own particular time, he was sent to all of the Prophets, and therefore his message and prophecy is universal and for all of creation, from Adam until the Day of Resurrection, and the Prophets and their nations are all from his *Umma* in a general sense. This implies that the Prophet's statement "I was sent to all of mankind entirely" includes those

who were before his time. This, in turn, sheds light on the meaning of his statement “I was a Prophet when Adam was between soul and body,” and explains the wisdom behind the Prophets being under his Standard in the Hereafter and him leading them in prayer during the miraculous Night Journey.

This is further supported by Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi’s exegesis. He said regarding Allah’s words *“Blessed is He who revealed the Criterion upon His servant that he may be a warner to the worlds [alamin]”* (24:35): “This includes the angels and others.”

THE FIRST CREATION IS THE MUHAMMADAN LIGHT

‘Abd al-Razzaq narrated with his chain from Jabir b. ‘Abdullah al-Ansari (Allah be pleased with him) who said, “I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! May my mother and father be sacrificed for you! Please inform me about the first thing that Allah created before all things.’ The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) replied, ‘O Jabir, the first thing Allah created was the light of your Prophet from His light, and that light remained in the midst of His Power for as long as He wished, and at that time there was neither a Tablet nor a Pen nor a Paradise nor a Fire nor an angel nor a heaven nor an earth. And when Allah wished to create creation, He divided that Light into four parts and from the first He made the Pen, from the second He made the Tablet, and from the third He made the Throne. Then He divided the fourth part into four parts and from the first of it He made the Bearers of the Throne (*Hamalat al-Arsh*), from the second He made the Footstool (*Kursi*), and from the third He made the remaining angels. Then He divided the fourth part into four parts and from the first part of it He made the heavens, from the second He made the earths, and from the third He made the Paradise and Hellfire. Then He divided the fourth part into four parts and from the first of it He made the light of the believers’ vision, from the second

He made the light of their hearts, which is knowledge of Allah, and from the third He made the light of their tongues, which is divine unity: “There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” [And from the fourth part of the fourth part He made everything else.]”⁹

I say: The meaning of this narration is corroborated by the words of the Most High, “*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His Light [i.e., the light of Muhammad] is like a niche within a lamp.*” (24:35)

THE DISAGREEMENTS OF THE SCHOLARS REGARDING THE FIRST CREATION AFTER THE MUHAMMADAN LIGHT

The scholars disagree about the first creation after the Muhammadan light. Some have said that it is the Throne, because the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said in an authentic report, “Allah established the decrees of the creation

⁹ This hadith is said to be narrated in the *Musannaf* of ‘Abd al-Razzaq al-San‘ani, although it is not found in the extant copies in circulation today. It has also been recorded in different wordings by Imam al-Bayhaqi in *Dala’il al-Nubuwwa*, al-Qastalani in *al-Mawahib al-laduniyya*, Ibn Hajar al-Haytami in *Afdal al-qura* and *al-Fatawa al-hadithiyya*, Muhammad al-Fasi in *Matali’ al-masarrat*, al-Zurqani in *Sharh al-mawahib*, al-Diyarbarki in *Tarikh al-khamis*, and Shaykh ‘Abd al-Haqq Dihlawi in *Madarij al-Nubuwwa*. Other scholars who cited this hadith in various wordings include: Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani (*al-Matalib al-‘alayya*, 4:177), al-‘Ajluni (*Kashf al-khafa*, 1:311), Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi (*al-Hadiqa al-nadiyya* §60), Ahmad al-Shami (*Sharh al-Ni’mā al-kubra’ala al-‘alāmin*), al-Sayyid Mahmud al-Alusi (*Ruh al-mā’ani*, 17:105, 8:71), Sayyid Ahmad b. ‘Abdullah al-Bakri (*al-Anwar fi Mawlid al-Nabi Muhammad* (Allah bless him and give him peace), p. 5), Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (*Sīr al-asrār*, pp. 12–14) Shaykh ‘Ali b. Burhan al-Din al-Halabi (*al-Sīra al-Halabīyya*, 1:31), Shaykh Isma’il Haqqi (*Ruh al-bayan*), Ibn Hajj al-Abdari (*al-Madkhal*, 2:34), Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karim al-Jili (*al-Namus al-a’zam*), Shaykh Sulayman al-Jamal (*al-Futuhat al-Ahmadiyya bī al-minah al-Muhammadiyya*, p. 6), Shaykh ‘Umar b. Ahmad Kharputi (*Sharh qasidat al-burda*, p. 73), Shaykh Nizam al-Din b. Hasan al-Nisaburi (*Ghara’ib al-Quran*, 8:66), and our author Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari here and in his *Sharh al-Shifa* (1:505), and several others.

fifty-thousand years before the creation of the heavens and earth, and His Throne was over the water.”¹⁰ This explicitly mentions that the decrees were set after the creation of the Throne. In the raised [*marfu'*] *hadith* of ‘Ubada b. al-Samit it states that the decrees were recorded after the creation of the pen: “The first thing Allah created was the pen, and He said to it, ‘Write.’ The pen replied, ‘O my Lord! What shall I write?’ Allah said, ‘Write all of the decrees of the creation.’” This was narrated by Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi, the latter of whom declared it rigorously authentic. However, there is another rigorously authentic raised *hadith* from Abu Razin al-‘Uqayli recorded by Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi: “The water was created before the Throne.” This narration is supported and indicated by the verse, “*And His Throne was upon the water.*” (II:7) Al-Suddi narrated with multiple chains that “Allah did not create anything before the creation of the water.”¹¹ We know, however, that the first creation in the absolute sense is the Muhammadan light, followed by the water and then the Throne and pen, and that any mention of a “first” prior to the Muhammadan light is a relative ascription [*idafiya*] only.

THE MUHAMMADAN LIGHT SHONE FROM ADAM’S FOREHEAD

It has been recorded: “When Allah created Adam, He placed that light in his back and it shone forth from his forehead. Then Allah Most High raised him to the ground-spread of His kingdom and caused him to be carried upon the shoulders of the angels. The angels were then ordered to escort him around the celestial realms so he could behold the marvels of His kingdom.” Ja’far b. Muhammad said, “[His] soul remained in Adam’s head for one hundred years, and then Allah Most High taught him the names of everything in the creation. Then He commanded the angels to

¹⁰ Recorded by Ahmad in his *Musnad* and al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan*.

¹¹ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, 2:453.

prostrate to him with the prostration of reverence [*sujud al-ta'zim*] and salutation [*tahiyya*]—not the prostration of worship [*sujud al-'ibada*]—as the brothers of Yusuf did for him. So in reality, the prostration was to him [the Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace)] and for Allah's sake, and Adam was akin to the *qibla*.

WHAT WAS HAWWA'S DOWRY?

It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbas: "On Friday, between the time of the sun passing its zenith until the time of the late afternoon, Allah Most High created for him [Adam] his mate, Hawwa, from one of his left ribs while he was sleeping, and she was called Hawwa because she was created from a living being [*hayy*]. After Adam woke up and saw her, he inclined toward her and outstretched his hand to her, but the angels called out, 'O Adam, wait!' 'Why,' asked Adam, 'for Allah has created her for me?' The angels replied, 'You must wait until you pay her dowry.' 'What is her dowry?' Adam inquired. 'You must invoke three prayers upon Muhammad,' the angels replied."¹²

Ibn al-Jawzi mentioned in *Salwat al-Ikhwan*: "When he drew close to her she demanded her dowry, so Adam cried out, 'O my Lord! What shall I give her?' Allah said, 'O Adam! Invoke twenty prayers upon my beloved Muhammad son of Abd Allah,' and so Adam did that."

Perhaps the three prayers [mentioned in the first narration] were an engagement gift and the twenty prayers were the entire dowry paid later.

¹² Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-nihayah*, 1:74.

ADAM SEEKS A MEANS OF APPROACH [TAWASSUL] THROUGH THE PROPHET (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

*It is reported from Umar b. al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “When Adam committed his error he said, ‘O my Lord! I ask You to forgive me by the right of Muhammad.’ Allah said, ‘O Adam! How do you know about Muhammad whom I have not yet created?’ Adam replied, ‘O my Lord! After You created me with Your Hand and breathed into me of Your Spirit, I raised my head and saw written on the heights of the Throne, “There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” I realized that You would not place next to Your Name any but the Most Beloved of Your creation.’ Allah said, ‘O Adam! I have forgiven you, and were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created you.” This report was narrated by al-Bayhaqi in his *Dala'il [al-Nubuwwa]* from the *hadith* of 'Abd al-Rahman b. Zayd b. Aslam. He [al-Bayhaqi] said, “This is a lone report [*tafarrud*] from Abd al-Rahman.” It was also reported by al-Hakim, who declared it rigorously authentic. Al-Tabari also mentioned this report with the additional wording, “...and he is the last of the Prophets from your progeny.”*

In the *hadith* of Salman reported by Ibn 'Asakir it mentions, “Jibril descended upon the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and said to him, ‘Your Lord says “If I have taken Ibrahim as an intimate friend [Khalil], then certainly I have taken you as my beloved [Habib]; I have not created anything nobler in My sight than you. Indeed, I have created the world and its inhabitants in order to acquaint them with your esteemed rank in My sight. Were it not for you I would not have created the world!””

How excellent is the statement of my master 'Ali [Wafa], who said:

*The heart is put to rest, so live in comfort, O body;
This delight is eternally abiding*

*Live under Allah's protection, under his banner;
Neither fear nor misery shall be there
The spirit of existence and theophany of the One;
Creation, were it not for him, would not be complete
Thus it is reported that 'Isa, Adam, and those before
Are as eyes, but he is their light
Had Satan seen his resplendent light in Adam's face
He would have been the first to prostrate;
Had Nimrod experienced the beauty of his countenance
He would have worshiped the All-Mighty
In the company of the Intimate Friend, and he wouldn't have denied
But Allah's beauty is exalted and thus unseen
Save for those whom Allah, the Subsistent, favors*

Allah Most High created Hawwa in order for Adam to find comfort in her, and for her to find comfort in him. When he took to her, his blessings engulfed her, and in those goodly days she gave birth to forty children in twenty wombs, but gave birth to Shith [Seth] alone out of honor for the one to whom Allah gave prophethood that was carried in his seed. When Adam passed away, Shith was appointed in charge of his siblings. Shith then ordered one of his sons as he was ordered by his father Adam and instructed him that he must not place that light [in his seed] in any but a pure women. This instruction continued to be passed down, generation after generation, until Allah caused that light to reach 'Abd al-Muttalib and his son 'Abdullah.

THE PURITY OF THE PROPHET'S LINEAGE (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

Allah Most High has purified this noble lineage from the fornication of the pre-Islamic period of ignorance [Jahiliyya]. This is reported in many acceptable *hadith* reports. Al-Bayhaqi reported in his *Sunan* that Ibn 'Abbas said, "The Messenger of Allah (Allah

bless him and give him peace) said, ‘Nothing of me hailed from the fornication of *jahiliyya*. I was only born through the union of Islam.’”

Al-Qastalani said, “The word [used here,] *al-siffah*, with a *kasra* vowel-mark on the letter *sin*, means fornication. The intended meaning of it here is when a woman sleeps with a man for a period of time and then gets married to him afterwards.”

Ibn Sa’d and Ibn ‘Asakir both reported from Hisham b. Muhammad b. al-Sa’ib al-Kalbi, who reported from his father who said, “I accounted for five hundred grandmothers of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) [when tracing his noble lineage], and I did not find a single fornicator among them or anyone else who engaged in the practices of *jahiliyya*!”

‘Ali b. Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “I was born in wedlock and I was not transmitted through the loins of a fornicator from the time of Adam until I was born to my mother and father; I was not touched by any of the fornication of *jahiliyya*.” This was narrated by al-Tabarani in *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, Abu Nu’aym, and Ibn ‘Asakir.

Abu Nu’aym also reported from Ibn ‘Abbas in a raised tradition, “None of my forefathers ever committed fornication, and Allah continued to transmit me from the pure loins of fathers to the pure wombs of mothers. Never would a family line branch out in two except that I was in the best of the two.” Ibn ‘Abbas also reported that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, commenting on the verse “*And your movement among those who prostrate themselves*” (26:209): “From one Prophet to another until I became a Prophet [in the worldly realm].” This was narrated by al-Bazzar and Abu Nu’aym has a similar report. This means that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was transmitted through the loins of the noble Prophets; it does not mean that all

of his fathers were Prophets, for that runs counter to the scholarly consensus. Neither does this report mean that all of the Prophet's forefathers were from the adherents to Islam, for some of them, as the notable jurists have concurred, were disbelievers, such as Abu Talib, Ibrahim's father, and the Prophet's own parents.¹³ I had detailed this issue in a separate research and furnished decisive and unequivocal proofs refuting al-Suyuti's three epistles on the subject.

Moving on, we look at the verse "*from yourselves....*" (9:128) This means "*from your genus.*" In other words, "he is a human like you; however, he is a Messenger who conveys the message from Us." This is found in the statement of the Most High, "*Say, 'I am only a human like you; it is revealed to me that your God is One God.'*" (17:94) The wisdom behind [this statement] is that a shared humanity is cause for affinity, which in turn leads to closeness and complete order. In addition, a shared humanity makes it easier to emulate him more fully, for had an angel been sent [as a prophet to humanity], some would object on the grounds that he is an angel and that they are humans and thus incapable of following him due to their human weakness. This cannot be said if the messenger is human; instead, he is to be emulated in his statements, actions, spiritual states, and ways, because he is the intermediary (Wasita) between the Sender [Allah] and those to whom he was sent. He takes the spiritual outpourings from the Real [Allah] and gives a portion to the creation.

Many among the disbelievers failed to understand this point and were heedless of it, so they said out of denial, "*Has Allah sent a human being as a messenger?*" (17:94) This demonstrates the shallow-mindedness of the disbelievers, for they were pleased to take

¹³ The soundest position is that both Ibrahim's father (who was named Tarah, not Azar, the latter being his paternal uncle) and the Prophet's parents were monotheists. For more on both points, see the work *Of Pure Origin*.

a stone as a god but believed that it was farfetched for a messenger to be a human being!

SYNOPSIS

The upshot of all of this is that the arrival of the Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) is a tremendous bounty and his humanity is a magnificent gift. Some have said that the verse “*from yourselves*” alludes to his kinship. This does not contradict the former interpretation, and it is in fact supported by the statement of the Most High “*And We have not sent a Messenger save with the tongue [language] of his people.*” (14:4) It is authentically reported from Ibn ‘Abbas with numerous chains of transmission that he said, “There is not a single tribe from the Arabs save that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born from them—their Mudar, their Rabi’, and their Yamani.” This is supported by the statement of the Most High, “*Say, I do not ask of you any payment for this message save love through kinship.*” (42:23)

Imam Ahmad narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas who said, “There is not a single clan of the Quraysh save that the Prophet has kinship with it. The verse was revealed, ‘*Say, I do not ask of you any payment for this message save love through kinship.*’” Imam Ahmad also narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas who said, “You have not joined the ties between them and me.” In one of the canonical Quranic readings (*qira’at*) this verse reads “*From your most valuable [mín anfasíkum]*” with a *fatha* vowel-mark on the letter *fa’*. This means the most esteemed and revered among you, and has been transmitted by al-Hakim from Ibn ‘Abbas. Ibn Mardawayh reported that Anas said, “The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) recited the verse ‘Certainly there has come to you a Messenger from your most valuable [mín anfasíkum]...’” (9:128) whereupon ‘Ali b. Abi Talib asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah, what is the meaning of the phrase “you’re your most valuable”? The Messenger of Allah

(Allah bless him and give him peace) replied, ‘I am the most valuable of you all in lineage, siring, and character; there exists no fornication in my descent nor the descent of my forefathers all the way from Adam—all of my forefathers were sired in wedlock.’”

Al-Bayhaqi narrated in *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa* from Anas who said, “The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) delivered a sermon and said, ‘I am Muhammad, the son of ‘Abdullah, the son of al-Muttalib, the son of Hashim, the son of ‘Abd al-Manaf, the son of Qusayy, the son of Kilab, the son of Murra, the son of Ka'b, the son of Lu'ay, the son of Ghalib, the son of Fihr, the son of Malik, the son of al-Nadr, the son of Kinana, the son of Khuzayma, the son of Mudrika, the son of Ilyas, the son of Mudar, the son of Nizar. Never have the people split into two family lines save that Allah has placed me in the best of them. I have come from two parents and was untouched by anything that was prevalent in the time of *jahiliyya*—I was born in pure wedlock and was free from fornication from the time of Adam until I was born of my mother and father. I am the best of you in self and lineage.’”

Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi narrated (and al-Tirmidhi declared it authentic) from al-‘Abbas b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib who said, “The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, ‘When Allah created the creation, He placed me among the best of His creation. When He split them up He placed me among the best of the two groups. Then He created the tribes and placed me in the best tribe. When He created the souls He placed me in the best of them. Then He created the houses and placed me in the best house—I am therefore the best of you in house and in self.’” In other words, he was the best of them in pedigree and personality and self.

Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi, al-Tabarani, Abu Nu'aym, al-Bayhaqi, and Ibn Mardawayh all narrated that Ibn ‘Umar said, “The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said,

‘Allah created the creation and chose from them the Children of Adam. From the Children of Adam He choose the Arabs, and from the Arabs He chose Mudar. From Mudar He choose the Quraysh and from the Quraysh He choose Banu Hashim. Then He choose me from Banu Hashim—so I am the choicest of the choicest.’”

Ibn Sa’d narrated from Qatada who said, “We were told that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, ‘When Allah wishes to send a prophet, He looks at best tribe among the inhabitants of the earth and sends a man to the best of them.’”

In a raised report from Zayn al-‘Abidin ‘Ali b. al-Husayn, from his grandfather ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, it is reported that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “I was light in the presence of Allah [bayn yaday Allah], the Exalted and Sublime, fourteen thousand years before the creation of Adam. When Allah created Adam, He placed that light in his loins, and I was continually transmitted from loin to loin until I settled in the loins of ‘Abd al-Muttalib.”

Qadi ‘Iyad cited a similar report in his *al-Shifa*—without a chain—from Ibn ‘Abbas: “Quraysh was a light in the presence of Allah Most High one thousand years before the creation of Adam. That light glorified Allah and the angels glorified Allah with their glorification, and when Allah created Adam, He placed that light in Adam’s loins. The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, ‘So Allah caused me to descend to the earth within Adam’s loins, and then He placed me in Nuh’s loins, and then cast me into Ibrahim’s loins, and Allah continued to transmit me through noble and pure loins until I was born to parents who had never committed fornication.’”

A poet once said:

*The Divine safeguarded Muhammad’s honor
And due to his name, his forefathers were protected*

Eschewing fornication, they were untouched by shame

From Adam all the way to his father and mother

Al-Bukhari narrated from Abu Hurayra who reported that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “I was sent from the best generation of the Children of Adam and transmitted until I appeared in the generation I am in.”

Al-Sakhawi said:

The Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) is the master of the first and the last and the angels brought nigh. He is the master of the creation entirely. He is the Beloved of the Lord of the Worlds who was exclusively given the Greatest Intercession [*al-Shafaa' al-'Uzma*] on the Day of Judgment. He is our master Abu al-Qasim, Abu Ibrahim, Muhammad, the son of 'Abdullah, the son of 'Abd al-Muttalib (whose name was Shayba al-Hamid). It is said that the reason his grandfather is called 'Abd al-Muttalib is because his father Hashim said (as he was on his deathbed in Mecca) to his brother al-Muttalib, “Go find your servant in Yathrib.” It is also said that Shayba's uncle, Muttalib, came with him to Mecca with Shayba riding behind him; and because that is a subservient manner of riding, Muttalib was asked about him, to which he replied, “He is my servant.” He was too shy to say that Shayba is his nephew, but once they settled, it became clear that he was. He [*'Abd al-Muttalib*] was the first of the Arabs to dye his hair black. He lived for one hundred and forty years.

[‘Abd al-Muttalib was] the son of Hashim, whose name was 'Amr. He was called Hashim because when his people suffered drought, he would break [*yahshim*] the bread used for *tharid* [a meat and bread dish].

Hashim was the son of Manaf, the son of Qusayy. The name Qusayy is a diminutive form of the word *qasīyy*, which means remote. He was given this name because he was far away from his family in the lands of Quda'a when his mother Fatima was pregnant with him.

Qusayy was the son of Kilab. The name Kilab is either derived from the verbal noun [*masdar*] of *mukalaba*, such as the phrase “*kalabtu al-’aduwa mukalabatan*,” i.e., “I stormed the enemy,” or it is from the *kilab*, i.e., the plural of the word dog [*kalb*]. The Arabs took plurals as proper names to give the impression of large numbers as if they were wild animals. Once, a Bedouin Arab was asked, “Why do you all give your children the worst names, such as *Kalb* [dog] and *Dhi’b* [wolf], but you give your servants the best names, such as *Marzuq* [the recipient of sustenance] and *Rabah* [the profitable]?” The Bedouin replied, “We name our children for the sake of our enemies and we name our servants for our sake.” By this they mean that their sons are a multitude against their enemies and as arrows through their throats, and it is for this reason the Arabs chose these kinds of names.

Kilab was the son of Murra, with a *damma* vowel-mark on the *mīm* and a double enunciation on the letter *ra’*. Murra was the son of Ka’b, who was the first person to name the [sixth day of the week] *Jumu’ā* [Friday]. Before Ka’b changed its name, Friday was called *’Uruba*. Ka’b used to deliver speeches on that day and Quraysh would assemble to listen to him speak. He is the first person open a speech with, “*Amma bād*” [to commence] and it is possible that he predicted the appearance of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and informed the Quraysh that he is from his offspring and commanded them to follow him. . . .

Ka'b is the son of Lu'ay, whose name is a diminutive form of *al-Lay'*.

Lu'ay is the son of Ghalib, who is the son of Fihr, with a *kasra* vowel-mark on the letter *fā'*. His name is also Quraysh and it is unto him that the tribe of Quraysh ascribes itself. Those who are not from his descendants are not Qurayshi: instead they are Kinani. This is the soundest view and it is unto him that the Quraysh are ascribed.

Fihr is the son of Malik, the son of Nadr. It is said that Nadr was given as a nickname because of the resplendence of his face [*nadara*]. His actual name is Qays and many consider him to be the head of Quraysh.

Nadr is the son of Kinana, said with a *kasra* vowel-mark on the letter *kaf*. He is Abu Qubayla the son of Khuzayma, said with a vowelised *kha'* and *zay*. Khuzayma is the son of Mudrika, in the form of *fā'il* [the subject-doer].

Mudrika is the son of Ilyas. According to [the philologist] Ibn al-Anbari, his name is spelled with a *kasra* vowel-mark on the articulated *hamza*. Others, however, such as Qasim b. Thabit, say that it is spelled with a silent *hamza* and a definite *lam*, like the name of the well-known Prophet [Ilyas] which means the opposite of hope [despair]. Al-Suhayli said: "This is the soundest view. It is reported that he [Ilyas] would hear the Prophet's *talbiya* for the Hajj [i.e., saying *labbayk Allahumma labbayk*] s from his loins." Al-Suhayli also reported in *al-Rawd* [*al-unuf*] that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Do not insult Ilyas for he was a believer." Zubayr reported that Ilyas would speak out against the changes Banu Isma'il made to the sacred traditions of their forefathers. He would exhort them

and convince them to adopt his views and they would be pleased with him more than anyone after Udud.¹⁴ He is the first person to donate camels to the Sacred House [the Ka'ba] and the Arabs show great and wise reverence for him.

Ilyas is the son of Mudar. Some say that he was called Mudar because his immense beauty would hurt the hearts of those who saw him. He also had a beautiful voice. One day he fell off his camel and injured his hand. Feeling pain, he called out, “O my hand, O my hand!” [*wa aydah*], and his camel, upon hearing his pleasant voice, became energized (and that was the basis for *hida* among the Arabs, whereby they sing to drive camels during a journey). He spoke the truth who said that “he [Mudar] was the first person to use *hida*.” Some of his recorded statements include: “Whosoever plans evil shall harvest regret, and whosoever plants good shall harvest it swiftly.” There is a report from Ibn ‘Abbas that reads, “Do not insult Mudar and Rabi'a [i.e., Mudar's brother], for they were both Muslims upon the religion of Ibrahim.” In a similar report from Ibn ‘Abbas, there is also mention of Khuzayma, Ma'add, ‘Adnan, Udud, Qays, Tamim, Asad, and Dibba. It states that they all died upon the religion of Ibrahim (upon whom be peace). In yet another narration from Ibn ‘Abbas it reads, “So we only mention them as fellow Muslims are mentioned.”

Mudar is the son of Nizar, said with a *kasra* vowel-mark on the *nun* and single vowel-mark on the *zay*. This name is derived from *nazar*, which means uncommon. He was called Nizar because he was a rarity of his time. Some say that he was called Nizar because when his father looked

¹⁴ Udud b. Zayd al-Kahlani from Qahtan. He is one of their forefathers, though nothing is known about the year of his birth or his life details.

at him after his birth he saw the light of Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) between his eyes and became extremely delighted. As a result of this delight, his father fed many people and said, “This is all *nazar*,” i.e., this is all minuscule in comparison to what is owed to this newborn.”

Nizar is the son of Ma’add, said with a *fatha* vowel-mark on the letters *mim* and *ayn*, and with a double enunciation on the letter *dal*. It is reported that when Bakhtasir invaded the Arab lands, Allah revealed to Armiya [Jeremiah]—who was Prophet from Banu Isra’il at that time—saying, “Go to Ma’add and take him out of his homeland to the Levant and take care of him, for Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets, shall descend from his children.”¹⁵

It is also reported that when his offspring were between twenty and forty in number, they raided the camp of Prophet Musa, but when Musa’s forces were alerted and Musa was about to drive them back, Allah revealed to him, saying, “Do not supplicate against them.” In another wording of this report Musa supplicated against them but it went unanswered until they [Ma’add’s offspring] raided it three times. Then, Musa supplicated, “O my Lord! I invoke You against a folk who have raided us, but You did not answer my supplication against them!” Allah said, “O Musa! My choicest servant in the final days is contained within them.”

Ma’add is the son of ‘Adnan, said with a *fatha* vowel-mark on the letter *ayn*. There is no difference of opinion regarding the noble prophetic lineage up to this point.

¹⁵ Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-nihaya*, 2:194.

THE DISAGREEMENT OF THE SCHOLARS OVER THE NOBLE PROPHETIC LINEAGE AFTER 'ADNAN

When it comes to the noble prophetic lineage, the only disagreement among scholars is with regard to those who come after 'Adnan. In fact, there are numerous views at odds with each other. For that reason, when the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) "would describe his lineage he would not go past 'Adnan. He would instead say, 'The genealogists lie, for Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, says: *'And many generations in between.'*" (25:38)¹⁶ Ibn 'Abbas said, "Had Allah willed to teach him [his lineage after 'Adnan] He would have taught him."

Ibn Dihya said:

The scholars have concurred—and consensus is a proof—that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) only described his lineage up to 'Adnan and did not go any further. In *Musnad al-Firdaws* it is reported that Ibn 'Abbas said, "When the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) would describe his lineage he would not go past Ma'add the son of 'Adnan. He (Allah bless him and give him peace) would instead say, 'The genealogists lie.'"

Al-Suhayli said, "It is not correct to say that this *hadith* is from the words of Ibn Mas'ud." Others, however, have said that when Ibn Mas'ud would recite the verse "*Has there not come to you the news of those before you: the people of Nuh, 'Ad, Thamud, and those after them? None know them save Allah*" (14:9) he would say, "The genealogists lie." This means that the genealogists would claim to have knowledge of lineages, but Allah denied their knowledge within the Book.

¹⁶ Ibid.

It is reported that Ibn ‘Umar said, “I can trace my lineage up to ‘Adnan, but we do not know those who come after that.”¹⁷

Ibn ‘Abbas said, “There are thirty forefathers between ‘Adnan and Isma’il but they are unknown.”¹⁸ ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr, “We have not found anyone who knows the lineage after Ma’add the son of ‘Adnan.”¹⁹ Once [Imam] Malik was asked about a man who allegedly traced his lineage all the back to Adam. Imam Malik detested that and asked, “Who informed him of that?”²⁰ And a similar report is mentioned in which he spoke of those who trace their lineage to other Prophets.

‘ABD AL-MUTTALIB AND THE PEOPLE OF THE ELEPHANTS

Ibn Shihab said, “The first virtue mentioned about ‘Abd al-Muttalib concerns the time when Quraysh fled the Sacred Precinct as the People of the Elephants approached. ‘Abd al-Muttalib proclaimed, ‘I swear by Allah! I shall never leave Allah’s Sacred Precinct and seek honor elsewhere, and I shall never desire any replacement for it!’ ‘Abd al-Muttalib remained in the Sacred House until there occurred the confrontation between him and the vice-regent of Abyssinia when the latter sought him out, which only increased ‘Abd al-Muttalib’s rank with the people of nobility and honor. Allah Most High destroyed the Abyssinian [army] and prevented them from attacking His House, and He removed worries from the inhabitants of Mecca.

‘Abd al-Muttalib took charge of providing water and *rifada* [for the pilgrims] after his uncle al-Muttalib. He continued to carry out the services provided by his people before him and attained to a level of honor that his forefathers did not reach and unlike

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

anything they achieved. ‘Abd al-Muttalib was highly loved and revered by his people and they relied upon him for guidance and direction. *Rifada* is a resource that the Quraysh of pre-Islamic times would extract among themselves as much as they were able, and after they amassed a sufficient amount they would trade in it, buying therewith food and raisins for the production of wine. They would then feed people and provide them drink during the days of the Hajj until it was completed.

‘ABD AL-MUTTALIB’S VOW TO SACRIFICE HIS SON

It is reported that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “I am the son of the two sacrificed ones.” By this the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) meant his grandfather Isma’il and his father ‘Abdullah. This narration was reported by al-Tabarani from the route of Ibn Wahb from Usama b. Zayd, from al-Zuhri, via Qubaysa b. Du’ayb who quoted ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbas: “‘Abd al-Muttalib vowed to sacrifice one of his sons if he was blessed with ten children. So after he had ten children, he cast lots between them to determine which one he should sacrifice, and the arrow fell against ‘Abdullah, who was the most beloved to ‘Abd al-Muttalib. He said, ‘I shall either sacrifice him or one hundred camels.’ Then he cast lots and the arrow fell against the one hundred camels.” Al-Zubayr b. Bakar mentioned that ‘Abd al-Muttalib sacrificed the camels and left them for the people.²¹

THE LEGALITY OF BLOOD MONEY

Thereafter it was legislated [in Islam] that blood money be paid to Muslims and set at one hundred camels, although in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance it was set at ten camels. That is why ‘Abd al-Muttalib cast lots multiple times, adding ten camels each time until it reached one hundred when the arrow fell against them.

²¹ Ibid., 2:248.

THE REASON FOR 'ABD AL-MUTTALIB'S VOW

Al-Qastalani said:

'Abd al-Muttalib vowed [to sacrifice 'Abdullah] because of the events surrounding the digging of the well of Zamzam. When al-Jurhumi—'Amr b. al-Harith—and his folk profaned the Sacred Precinct, Allah set against them people who expelled them from Mecca. When that occurred, 'Amr concealed treasures in the well of Zamzam by burying them deeply and then fled to Yemen with his folk. From that time forward, the well of Zamzam was hidden, unknown until the veils were lifted from it by way of dreams seen by 'Abd al-Muttalib. These dreams provided 'Abd al-Muttalib with signs and portents that he should dig it up, and so he was determined to uncover it. As he attempted this, Quraysh sought to prevent him, and many of their foolish ones harmed him and his son al-Harith severely. At the time, al-Harith was his only son, so he vowed that if provided with ten sons that become his helpers, he will sacrifice one of them. Thereafter 'Abd al-Muttalib dug up the well of Zamzam and received respect and honor.

'ABDULLAH'S MARRIAGE TO AMINA B. WAHB

Al-Barqi mentioned the reason behind 'Abdullah's marriage to Amina. He stated that 'Abdullah's father used to travel to Yemen and sit in the company of its aristocracy. Once when he traveled there, he happened upon a literate man who read the sacred scriptures. That man said to him, "Give me permission to examine your trade." He replied, "As you wish." The lettered man said, "I see prophecy and dominion, but it is only contained within the *Manafis* (i.e., 'Abd Manaf b. Qusayy and 'Abd Manaf b. Zuhra)." So when 'Abd al-Muttalib departed he took with him 'Abdullah and

married him off to Amina b. Wahb daughter of ‘Abd Manaf b. Zuhra b. Kilab.²²

Ka'b al-Ahbar said, “After that [her marriage], Allah bestowed Amina with such light, splendor, dignity, beauty, and perfection that she was called the master [Sayyida] of her people. ‘Abdullah possessed light between his eyes that remained until Allah gave leave for it to be deposited in the womb of his [the Prophet’s (Allah bless him and give him peace)] mother.”

Al-Bayhaqi narrated in *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa* via the route of Mu'amar, from al-Zuhri who said, “‘Abdullah was one of the handsomest men of Quraysh. He once passed by a group of women from Quraysh who were assembled, and a woman from them said, ‘O women of Quraysh! Who among you will marry this young man and capture the light that is between his eyes?’” So Amina married him and became pregnant with the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace).²³

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr recorded, “‘Abdullah was thirty years of age when he married Amina. It has also been reported that he was twenty-five; and others say that he was eighteen.” Al-Sakhawi stated, “That is the most correct view [i.e., that he was thirty].”

AMINA'S PREGNANCY

Al-Hafiz al-Khatib al-Baghdadi related that Sahl b. ‘Abdullah al-Tustari said, “When Allah wished to create Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) in the womb of his mother—which took place on a Friday night in the month of Rajab—He ordered the Angel Ridwan, who is the Gatekeeper of the gardens of Paradise, to open the gates of Firdaws, and lo, a caller proclaimed in the heavens and the earths: ‘Certainly, the preserved and stored

²² Recorded by Abu Nu'aym in *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*.

²³ *Ibid.*

light from which the Prophet and Guide (Allah bless him and give him peace) originates has been deposited this night in the womb of his mother wherein his creation shall be completed and from which he will come out as a Warner to the people!” Al-Zubayr b. Bakar said, “This was during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth [of Dhu al-Hijja] among the folk of Abu Talib near the middle-most *jamara* [stoning pillar].”²⁴

Al-Waqidi reported from Wahb b. Zum'a, from his paternal aunt who stated, “After Amina delivered the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) we used to hear her say, ‘I never felt that I was pregnant with him and I never felt any burden as other women feel; the only thing I experienced was the ending of my menstrual cycle.’ She would also say, ‘One Monday, as I was between wakefulness and sleep, someone came to me and asked, ‘Do you feel the effects of pregnancy?’ I replied, ‘I don’t know.’ Then he said to me, ‘You are pregnant with the master of this nation and its Prophet, so name him Muhammad!’”²⁵

Ibn Hibban narrated in his *Sahih* collection from the hadith of 'Abdullah b. Ja'far from Halima al-Sa'diyya, the Prophet's wet-nurse, who said, “Amina said to me, ‘Something tremendous shall come of this son of mine; never did I bear a load that was lighter or filled with more blessings than him. As I was giving birth to him, I saw a light resembling a comet that shone from me and lit up the necks of the camels from Busra [Bostra] to the Levant, and when I bore him he did not come out as other newborns do; rather, he came out with his feet planted firmly in the ground and with his head raised upwards toward the heavens.’”

²⁴ Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-nihaya*, 2:261.

²⁵ Recorded by Abu Nu'aym in *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE MUHAMMADAN LIGHT (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

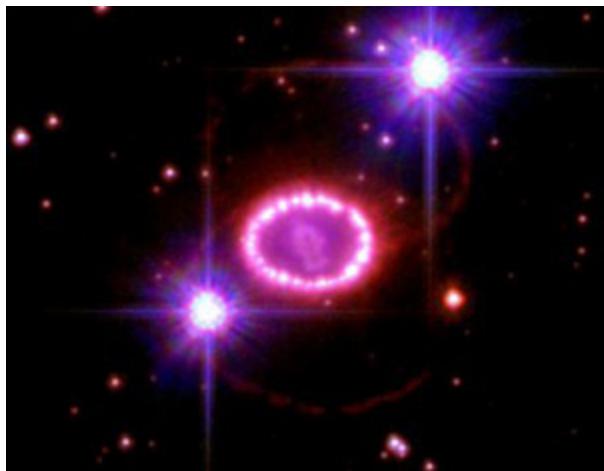


FIG. 1 Image of Supernova 1987A taken by the Hubble telescope in 2006, showing what looks like the outline of the Prophet Muhammad's Sandal (*Na'l*).

In a tradition narrated in the *Sahih* collection of Ibn Hibban, al-Hakim's [*Mustadrak*] and Imam Ahmad's *Musnad* and others, al-'Irbad b. Sariya al-Sulami reported that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Indeed, in the Mother of the Books [*Umm al-Kitab*] with Allah I was the Seal of the Prophets, even while Adam was suspended in clay. I shall inform you of the beginning of this: I am the answer to Ibrahim's supplication; I am the glad tidings of my brother 'Isa that he delivered to his people; and I am the embodiment of my mother's dream in which she saw herself giving birth with a light emitting from her that shone on the palaces of the Levant."

Al-Sakhawi commented:

Regarding the word “Busra,” our Shaykh opined, “It is possible that this is pronounced with a *damma* vowel-mark in the first letter, a *sukun* mark on the second letter, and followed by a shortened *alif* [*alif maqsura*]; it is also possible that it is pronounced as ‘*Basari*’ with a *fatha* vowel-mark on the letter *ba’* and *sad*. In the latter case, it would mean ‘my vision,’ i.e., she saw a vision directly with the vision of her eyes. Considering the former possibility, it would be *Busra* [*Bostra*], which is a well-known city located on the eastern outskirts of Damascus near Hawazin, a stopping point for travelers coming from the Hejaz, there is lying between it and the Levant proper only two resting points.



FIG. 2. Bostra ruins.

The reason why Bostra has been singled out for mention in this report even though other reports say “lit up from east to west,” and “lit up the earth”—both of which are more comprehensive—is

because the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) reached that exact spot and did not travel past it. Some have said, “This is a subtle indication of the unique qualities of the Levant, since the light of his prophethood was there, and some of the scriptures of old mention it as the abode of his terrestrial dominion: ‘Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. His birthplace is Mecca, his abode of migration is Yathrib, and his dominion is in the Levant.’” Mecca is where his prophecy began and the Levant is where it shall settle. This is why the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was taken on the miraculous night journey to Jerusalem—which lies in the Levant—and why Ibrahim before him migrated to the Levant. Nay, some of the forebears (*Salaf*) said, “Allah has not sent Prophets except from the Levant.” And if one was not sent from it he migrated to it, and in the last days knowledge and faith shall settle in the Levant, and thus the light of prophecy shall be brighter there than any other land.

THE VARIOUS NARRATIONS CONCERNING THE TIME IN WHICH THE MUHAMMADAN LIGHT (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE) APPEARED

Although there are disagreements regarding the exact time the Muhammadan Light appeared—some maintain that it was during the pregnancy and others maintain that it was during the birth, while the latter position is supported by a stronger narration—there is nothing to prevent us from asserting that it appeared at both times.

In short, this Light is an allusion to the light of guidance unto which the inhabitants of the earth shall be guided, and the spatial distance of his nation’s dominion. This religion spread across the horizons in height and width, settling predominantly between southernmost and northernmost regions, removing thereby the darkness of idolatry and misguidance, as Allah Most High said, “*Certainly, there has come to you from Allah a light and a manifest book. By it,*

*Allah guides those who follow His good-pleasure to the paths of peace, and He takes them out of multiple forms of darkness to the light by His leave, and He guides them to the straight path.” (5:15–16) He also said, “So those who believe in him, support him, help him, and follow the light that was sent with him—indeed, they are the triumphant.” (7:157) And the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, as reported in *Sahih Muslim* and others by Thawban, “The eastern and western portions of the earth were gathered for me, and indeed, the dominion of my nation shall reach them.”*

DID AMINA GIVE BIRTH TO ANOTHER CHILD BESIDES THE PROPHET (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)?

It may be inferred from Amina’s statement “never did a bear a load that was lighter or filled with more blessings than him” that she bore other children. This is especially true considering the report from Ibn Sa’d that is even more explicit in its import. He narrated the hadith of Ishaq b. ‘Abdullah who said, “The Prophet’s mother said, ‘I have bore children but never did I bear...’” Ibn Sa’d commented: “Al-Waqidi said, ‘Neither we nor the people of knowledge are aware of this; neither ‘Abdullah nor Amina had any other children besides the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace).’

Al-Waqidi also said, “He [my nephew] al-Zuhri narrated to me from his uncle who said, ‘Amina said, “I carried him but found no difficulty until the time I bore him.”’” Other narrators mention this report, but with the wording: “I sensed his presence; however, I did not feel any difficulty as other women feel.”

Al-Sakhawi said:

It is possible to interpret these two wordings. For one, if the Ishaq b. ‘Abdullah in the previous narration is Ibn Talha, then its chain is *mursal* [abridged] and the men in

its chain are the same narrators found in the *Sahih* collections [of al-Bukhari and Muslim], and in that report it mentions that Amina did not have any previous miscarriages. This makes it possible to reconcile between the various narrations—assuming that we accept al-Waqidi's account. Ibn al-Jazari said, “The scholars of transmission concur that Amina did not carry any other child besides the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), so her statement “never did I bear a load” is a form of hyperbole, or it means that it coincided with her carrying [the Prophet]; and it is said that it is more appropriate to join between these two views.”

IBRAHIM'S PRAYER

His statement, “As for Ibrahim's prayer,” it refers to the time when Ibrahim (upon whom be peace) began to construct the Ka'ba. At that time, Ibrahim (upon whom be peace) asked Allah Most High to make Mecca a source of security, and to draw people to it, and to provide them fruits. He said, “*O our Lord! Send to them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them Your verses and teaching them the book and the wisdom, and purifying them. Indeed, You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.*” (2:129) Allah responded to Ibrahim's supplication in the form of this Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), and He made him the Messenger that Ibrahim prayed would be sent to the inhabitants of Mecca.

This means that when Allah decreed to make Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) the Seal of the Prophets and when He established it in the Preserved Tablet, He fulfilled His decree by inspiring Ibrahim (upon whom be peace) to supplicate with the invocation mentioned, in order that the Prophet's arrival (Allah bless him and give him peace) be a result of Ibrahim's supplication, as it is said, “He transmitted him from his loins to the loins of his children.”

THE GLAD TIDINGS OF 'ISA

The glad tidings of 'Isa refers to time when Allah Most High commanded 'Isa to deliver to his people the glad tidings [of the coming Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)]. As a result of this, the Children of Israel knew about the Prophet [Muhammad] (Allah bless him and give him peace) before his [physical] creation. Allah mentioned 'Isa's statement in the verse: "*And delivering glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me whose name is Ahmad.*" (61:6)

THE PROPHET'S BIRTH (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE) WAS A CAUSE FOR DELIGHT AND VICTORY FOR THE MECCANS

Al-Sakhawi said:

It is recorded that the year preceding the Prophet's (Allah bless him and give him peace) birth was an insufferable year of drought and difficulty for Quraysh. But during the time [his mother carried him (Allah bless him and give him peace) in her womb], the earth became green with pasturage and trees were laden with fruits, and the Meccans called that year the "Year of Victory and Delight." Delegations came out to celebrate and 'Abd al-Muttalib—who was at the time the leader of Quraysh and the other Arab tribes—would go out daily uncovered and circumambulate the Ancient House [the Ka'ba] and proclaim, "O assembly of Quraysh! I am looking at the similitude of person whose appearance is like a piece of complete light, and I tire not at looking at him; yet you, O Quraysh, deny seeing him, either out of your own envy or out of resentment."

Ibn 'Abbas reported: "On that night, every single beast belonging to the Quraysh spoke and said, 'By the Lord of the Ka'ba, Muhammad has now been carried [in his mother's womb]! He is the leader of the world

entirely and the lamp of its inhabitants!” After this, there no longer remained any soothsayers among Quraysh or any of the Arab tribes that performed the pilgrimage. The knowledge of divination and soothsaying was removed from them and every king in the world at the time fell into ignominy and was mute, unable to speak for the entire day. The wild beasts of the east delivered the good news to the wild beasts of the west, and the sea creatures spread the good news to each other. A call was proclaimed in the heavens and the earth: “Receive glad tidings! The time has arrived for Abu al-Qasim Muhammad to appear on the earth with blessings and providence!”

[...] He (Allah bless him and give him peace) remained in his mother’s womb for nine months and not once during that time did she ever complain of pain, flatulence, or any other effects that affect most pregnant women.

THE PASSING OF HIS FATHER ‘ABDULLAH

Al-Waqidi said:

During the course of the pregnancy, the Prophet’s grandfather ‘Abd al-Muttalib sent his son ‘Abdullah to Gaza in the lands of the Levant to cater food for the Qurayshi trade caravan. As they were returning ‘Abdullah fell ill and stayed back in the City of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) under the care of his cousins from Banu ‘Adi b. al-Najjar, passing away one month later. Ibn Wahb reported from Yunus via Ibn Shihab: “He [‘Abd al-Muttalib] sent him to cater dates for them [the Qurayshi caravan] in Yathrib but died there and was buried in home of al-Nabigha.” Ibn Ishaq maintained that this report is the most

correct account of his passing, and it was also recorded by Ibn Sa'd and supported by al-Zubayr b. Bakar and others.

Ibn al-Jawzi said:

Most of the historiographers trace this back to the majority. Some, however, say that 'Abdullah passed away after the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace). Yahya b. Sa'd al-Umawi reported in his *Maghazi* collection via the route of 'Uthman b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Waqqasi (one of al-Zuhri's weak narrators), from Sa'id b. al-Musayyib: "When Amina gave birth to him (Allah bless him and give him peace), 'Abd al-Muttalib instructed his son to take him around the clans of the Arabs. 'Abdullah proceeded to display him to the various clans until he hired Halima as the Prophet's wet-nurse." It is mentioned that the Prophet lived with them [Halima's family] for six years, until the time when his breast was open, after which he was returned to his mother. The scholars disagree concerning how old the Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) was at that time. Some, such as Ishaq, state that he was two years and four months' old; others, as Ibn Sa'd quoted, said he was seven months' old; and others say that he (Allah bless him and give him peace) was seven months' old when 'Abdullah traveled to visit his paternal tribesmen [in Yathrib] where he passed away.

It is said that the angels proclaimed, "Our Lord and Master! Your Prophet has been orphaned!" Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, said, "I am his Protecting Friend [Wali], Guardian, and Helper." Abu Hayyan recorded in *al-Bahr al-Muhit* that Ja'far al-Sadiq was once asked, "Why was the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him

peace) orphaned.” Ja’far replied, “That no other creation could have a right over him.”

WHAT HIS FATHER LEFT BEHIND

Al-Sakhawi said:

His father left behind his bondswoman, Umm Ayman Baraka al-Habashiya, as well as five camels and a flock of sheep—and the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) inherited all of this. Umm Ayman (Allah be pleased with her) cared for the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace). The aforementioned cousins were from Hashim b. ‘Abd Manaf, who married Salma b. ‘Amr of Banu ‘Adi b. al-Najjar, who bore ‘Abd al-Muttalib. It is recorded in the Sahih collection [of al-Bukhari] in the hadith about the migration that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “For that reason, I visit the cousins of ‘Abd al-Muttalib and honor them.” As for the version of this hadith that reads, “I visit his cousins or kin,” the doubt mentioned in it [“or”] comes from the narration of Ishaq al-Sabi’i. This is considered figurative. The cousins were from the mother’s side and the visits used to be to Banu Malik b. al-Najjar, not Banu ‘Adi.

THE DESCRIPTION OF HIS BIRTH (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

Al-Bayhaqi reported in *Dala’il al-Nubuwwa*, as did al-Tabarani and Abu Nu’aym, from the route of Muhammad b. Abi Suwayd al-Thaqafi, from ‘Uthman b. Abi al-‘As who said, “Fatima b. ‘Abdullah al-Thaqafiya—one of the female Companions—narrated to me that she was in Amina’s company the night the latter was going through labor. She said, ‘I looked at the stars coming

close and drawing near. Startled, I said, “They are going to fall upon me!” However, when she [Amina] gave birth a light emitted from her that lit up the entire house and its environs.”

Ibn Sa’d said, “Al-Haytham b. Kharija informed us via Yahya b. Hamza > al-Awza’i > Hassan b. ‘Atiya: ‘When the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born he fell upon his palms and knees with his gaze cast upward to the heavens.’” This a strong *mursal* report. In another *mursal* report, this one from Ishaq b. Abi Talha, it mentions that Amina said, “I delivered him and he was clean; he was not born as a *sakhl* is born [i.e., a newborn who is beloved to his parents]. He was not covered by any impurity; he was sitting on the ground with his hands.”

Abu al-Hasan b. al-Bishran narrated from Ibn al-Sammak via Abu al-Hasan b. al-Bara’ who said, “Amina said, ‘When I delivered him, he came out sitting on his knees and looking toward the heavens, then he took a portion of the earth and went into prostration. As he was doing that, a utensil fell over upon him, but I saw that it was split, and there he was, sucking his thumb, from which milk was flowing.’”

Al-Sakhawi said:

After Amina gave birth to him (Allah bless him and give him peace), she sent a message to his grandfather informing him that she bore a son the night before, and requesting that he come to see him. When he arrived to see him, she informed him about what she saw during her delivery, whereupon he took him, stood up, and supplicated to Allah, thanking Him for His gift. In his supplication he said:

*All praise belongs to Allah who gave me
This young boy of pure pedigree*

*A leader over the other children from the cradle
I seek refuge [in Allah] for him at the House of pillars [the Ka'ba]*

ABU LAHAB'S DELIGHT UPON THE PROPHET'S BIRTH (ALLAH
BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

Abu Lahab's servant from his paternal uncle, Thuwayba, went and informed him that his brother 'Abdullah was blessed with the birth of a son. Upon hearing this news, Abu Lahab immediately manumitted her. Al-Qastalani said:

She is also one of the Prophet's wet nurses... It is reported that Abu Lahab was seen in a dream vision after his death and he was asked about his condition. He replied, "I am in the Fire; however, my punishment is lightened every Monday evening, and I am able to drink water from these finger tips [and he pointed to the tips of his index and middle finger]—and this is because I freed Thuwayba when she brought me the good news of the Prophet's birth and thus she was able to suckle him."

Ibn al-Jazari said:

If this is Abu Lahab, the disbeliever whom the Quran condemned, and yet he is rewarded in the Fire because of the delight he felt on the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace), what say you about the Muslim believer in divine unity who is of the Prophet's Umma and who feels happiness during the occasion of his birth and spends what he can in celebration of his love for him (Allah bless him and give him peace)? Certainly his reward from Allah Most Generous is that He bestows upon him of His vast bounty and allows him to enter the Paradise of Delight!

THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK GAVE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE
PROPHET'S BIRTH (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

Al-Hakim narrated in his *Sahih* collection from 'A'isha who said, "There was a Jewish merchant who once lived in Mecca. On the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) he proclaimed, 'O assembly of Quraysh! Was any child born among you tonight?' The inhabitants of Mecca told him, 'We do not know.' The man then said, 'So look into this matter, for tonight, the Prophet of this final nation has been born. Between his shoulders there is a sign containing several hairs similar in appearance to the hairs on a horse's mane [*urffaras*]. He will not suckle for two nights because an 'ifrit among the jinn will place his hand over his mouth. Upon hearing this, some people went out and asked around, and they were told, 'Tonight a son was born to 'Abdullah b. 'Abd al-Muttalib.' They then took this Jewish man to his [the Prophet's] mother and said, 'Come out and show us your son.' When she came outside, they uncovered his back and the Jewish man saw the birthmark and suddenly fell unconscious. When he finally came to they asked him, 'What is wrong?' He replied, 'By Allah! Prophethood has left the Children of Israel. O Quraysh! You will be assailed with such a force that its news will reach between the east and the west!'"

Al-Sakhawi said:

This is a proof that he (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born with the prophetic seal between his shoulder blades. It is one of the signs by which the People of the Book recognized him. They would inquire about it and request to see it. It is even reported that Heraclius sent a man to look at the prophetic seal and report back to him his findings. However, as we shall soon see, the two angels who split open his breast and

filled it with wisdom were also responsible for giving him the prophetic seal—and this is sounder than the previous view.

I [‘Ali al-Qari] say: It is possible to reconcile and join between the two reports. Al-Sakhawi continued:

As for the report stating that the prophetic seal was removed from between his shoulder blades after his passing, its chain is weak. Al-Khatib [al-Baghdadi] has a narration from Muhammad > ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amr b. ‘Uthman > his mother Fatima b. al-Husayn b. ‘Ali > her father al-Husayn b. ‘Ali: “On the night in which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born, a rabbi in Mecca proclaimed, ‘Tonight in this city of yours a Prophet is being born; he is described as one who will revere Musa and Harun but fight against their nation [the Children of Israel]. If he is not born among you then give good news to the people of Taif or Jerusalem.’ That night the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born and so the rabbi came out and went to his [the Prophet’s] living quarters, saying, ‘I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Musa is true and that Muhammad is true!’ Thereafter, the rabbi went missing and no one could find him.”

Abu Nu’aym reported in *Dala’il al-Nubuwwa* from the route of Shu’ayb from his father, from his grandfather who said, “There was a monk in Zahran named ‘Aysa...” At the end of this hadith it states, “On the night of the Prophet’s birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) he informed ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib that he [the Prophet Muhammad] is the Prophet of this *Umma*.” The hadith went on to describe the Prophet’s other qualities....

THE TOPPLING OF KISRA'S ARCH ON THE DAY OF THE
PROPHET'S BIRTH (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

Al-Sakhawi said:

The signs that appeared during and after the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) are numerous, not to mention the signs that appeared in Islam after he was tasked with the prophetic mission. These signs are well known to the *Umma*, and a group of scholars, namely Abu Nu'aym and al-Suhayli, have expended efforts in collecting these signs. These signs and portents not only took place before he was tasked with the prophetic mission; indeed, there were many that unfolded even before his birth.

One of these portents was reported by al-Hakim in *al-Iklil*, Abu Sa'id al-Naysaburi in *Sharaf al-Mustafa*, Abu Nu'aym in *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, al-Bayhaqi in *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, [Qadi 'Iyad] the author of *al-Shifa*, and reported by Ibn al-Sakan and others in *Ma'rifa al-Sahaba* from the hadith of Makhzam b. Hani', from his father who reported that one hundred and fifty years before [the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace)] "the Arches of Kisra split asunder." In other words, his Arch shook so loudly that its sound could be heard and it split apart from the top. The Shaykh of our Shaykhs, Ibn al-Jazari, said, "This split remains till this day. A group of people saw it in Midian and informed us. They say that fourteen loges fell from the uppermost part of the arch..."



FIG. 3 Arches of Kisra.

THE SACRED FIRE OF THE ZOROASTRIANS WAS EXTINGUISHED
AND SAWA'S LAKE DRIED UP ON THE DAY OF THE PROPHET'S
BIRTH (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

On the day of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace), and for the first time in one thousand years, the sacred fire worshiped by the Zoroastrians extinguished. They would offer devotions to this fire and keep it lit constantly, day and night, but on the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) none of them were able to keep it lit, despite their attempts.

Similarly, the lake of the city of Sawa—a city whose inhabitants were open in their idolatry and enmity [to faith]—dried up at the time of the Prophet's birth.²⁶ This lake, larger than a *farsakh* (4.827

²⁶ Lake Sawa still exists today. It is an Endorheic basin, feeding water from the Euphrates through a series of joint cracks which transport water to aquifers beneath it. Because of the equilibrium between the water feed and evaporation, the lake does not dry, which shows that the evaporation of its waters during the time of the Prophet's birth was nothing short of a miracle. It appears that the receding of Lake Sawa's waters was a temporary phenomenon marking the birth

km), was located in the Persian-Iraqi kingdom between Hamdan and Qom, and was a dock for ships and a means to travel to other cities, such as the Fergana Valley.²⁷ On the night of the Prophet's birth, this lake dried up and became a barren expanse of earth, as if there was never any water there before. Their water had dried up and evaporated to the point that a city was built in the place where it once stood, a city called Manawa which remains till this day a well-guarded city. Mubadhan, who was the chief judge of the region, saw a dream in which scores of roaring camels were leading packs of Arabian horses across the Tigris River and spreading through the lands.²⁸



FIG. 4 Lake Sawa

of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), since the water has since returned. Allah knows best.

²⁷ It is not plausible that Lake Sawa was a means of travelling to the Fergana Valley, since it is located in Central Asia stretching across present day Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Allah knows best.

²⁸ Imam al-Bayhaqi, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*. This dream was interpreted as a sign of the birth of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and the impending collapse of the Persian Empire.

THE DEVILS WERE ASSAILED WITH FLAMING METEORS

During the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) the devils were assailed with flaming meteors, but before that night, the devils would take up positions for hearing in every direction. It is also reported that Satan was veiled from the heavens on that night; although perhaps it was he who sat in positions for hearing and mentioned cryptically. Baqi b. Mukhlid, the author of a *Musnad* collection, mentioned in his exegesis, as we also narrated from Mujahid, that he, i.e., Satan, was caused to decay four times: when he was cursed, when he was forced to descend [to the earth], when the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born (and in one wording, “when he (Allah bless him and give him peace) was tasked with the prophetic mission”) and when Sura al-Fatiha of the Quran was revealed.²⁹

WAS THE PROPHET (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE) BORN WITH THE PROPHETIC SEAL, OR DID HE RECEIVE IT AFTER HIS BIRTH?

There is a difference of opinion over whether the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born with the prophetic seal (as mentioned earlier from the hadith of ‘A’isha) or whether he received it from one of the two angels when they split open his breast during his infancy. The former opinion was cited by Ibn Sayyid al-Nas, the latter by Mughlatay from Yahya b. ‘Abid in a passive-anonymous form [*sigha al-tamrid*]. The former position is sounder since there is a hadith from ‘A’isha found in the *Musnads* of al-Tayalisi al-Harith, as well as Abu Nu’aym’s *Dala’il al-Nubuwwa*, in which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “And he [i.e., Jibril] gave me the seal on my back and I was able to feel the touch of the seal upon my heart.” There is a similar hadith

²⁹ Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-nihaya*, 2:266–267.

from Abu Dharr in the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad and *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa* of al-Bayhaqi. I say: Taking the additional wordings in account, it is clear that it is possible to reconcile between reports.

THE PROPHET'S CIRCUMCISION (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

There is also a difference of opinion over the Prophet's circumcision: was he born circumcised or was he circumcised afterwards? Al-Tabarani, Abu Nu'aym, and others report from the route of al-Hasan from Anas that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "One of Allah's honors to me is that I was born circumcised and no one saw my nakedness." Ibn Sa'd relates the hadith of 'Ata' al-Kurasani from 'Ikrima from Ibn 'Abbas, from his father who reported that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) "was born circumcised and with his umbilical cord cut. His grandfather was delighted with him and stated, 'Something tremendous shall come from this son of mine.'" Abu Ja'far al-Tabarani said in his book of history, "The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born circumcised." Al-Hakim Abu 'Abdullah al-Tirmidhi said, "He (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born circumcised."

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr related in his *al-Tamhid*, "His grandfather circumcised him (Allah bless him and give him peace) on the seventh day [after his birth] and convened a celebration." I say: Since the celebration was convened on that day, it is possible that he thought that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was circumcised at that time. So the meaning of the phrase "circumcised him" here means that he disclosed the circumcision, since the Prophet's stature was clear. In another narration mentioned by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr it mentions that "on the seventh day, he sacrificed a sheep and invited Quraysh to partake of the food. After they ate the food they asked, 'O 'Abd al-Muttalib! What name have you given to

this son of yours for whose sake you have honored us?’ ‘Muhammad,’ he said. ‘Why,’ they asked, ‘have you chosen that name and not the names of your forebears?’ ‘Abd al-Muttalib replied, ‘I wanted Allah to praise him in the heavens just as He has created him on the earth.’”

The reports that say Jibril circumcised him (Allah bless him and give him peace) are declared anomalous [*shadh*] by the scholars. Al-’Iraqi said, “None of that is soundly established.” Imam Ahmad took a position of non-committal on the questions of whether the Prophet’s (Allah bless him and give him peace) grandfather circumcised him or not. Al-Marri said, “Imam Ahmad was asked if the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born circumcised or not. He replied, ‘Allah knows best; I do not know.’” Abu Bakr ‘Abd al-’Aziz b. Ja’far—one of the imams of the Hanbalis—relates that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born circumcised and with his umbilical cord cut, but Abu ‘Abdullah [Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal] dared not authenticate this hadith. Some of the imams say that the soundest view according to the narrations is that his grandfather circumcised him, but al-Hakim said, “The first position has been mass-transmitted in the reports.” Al-Sakhawi stated, “And that is the view to which I am inclined, especially considering the statement of the Prophet’s (Allah bless him and give him peace) mother, ‘I delivered him and he was clean.’” ...

ON THE NAME MUHAMMAD (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

Some of the imams say that Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, inspired his family to name him Muhammad, since it contains praiseworthy qualities, and in order for the name and the one named to correspond. It is said that names [*asma*] descend from the heavens [*sama*’. How beautiful then is the statement of Hassan b. Thabit:

*God attached the name of the Prophet to His Name
When the caller to prayer says that he bears witness
when [calling for] the five [prayers]
He portioned out to him from His name,
in order that he be exalted
For He is the Possessor of the Throne, the one who is Praised
And this is Muhammad [the oft-praised one]*

Al-Sakhawi said:

It was from Allah's enabling grace that the Prophet's grandfather named him as he did. This providence came either via direct inspiration or through a dream vision that he beheld. Abu al-Rabi' b. Salik al-Kala'i said, "Some claim that 'Abd al-Muttalib dreamed there was a silver chain that came from his back; one part extended toward the heaven, one part was on the earth, and one part was in the east and one part was in the west. Then this chain transformed into a tree and each leaf on the tree was a light, and the people of the east and west were holding on to it. When 'Abd al-Muttalib relayed this dream, it was interpreted as a newborn child that would come from his progeny who would be followed by the people of the east and west, and whom the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth will praise. This is why he was named Muhammad. This is in addition to what Amina told him when she said to give him that name."

Muhammad and Ahmad are two of his names, as mentioned in the Qur'an: "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" (48:29), and "And giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me whose name is Ahmad." (61:6) Al-Hakim related in his *Sahih* collection that Adam saw the name "Muhammad" written upon the Throne, and that Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, said to Adam, "Were it not for

Muhammad I would not have created you.” As for the hadith, “Were it not for you I would not have created the cosmos [*lawlak ma khalaqtu al-aflaq*],” its meaning is sound, even though al-San’ani said it is a forgery.

Qadi ‘Iyad said:

“Ahmad” is the superlative form for one who is given to praise more than others. “Muhammad” is ... for one who is oft-praised by others. He is the noblest of those who praise and his is the most sublime praise in this life and the next. He is the most praiseworthy of those who are praised, and more given to praise than all others who praise. He shall possess the Standard of Praise on the assembly ground on the Day of Resurrection to complete the perfection of praise for him. He will be known on the judgment plain with the attribute of praise. His Lord shall grant him the Praiseworthy Station [*al-Maqam al-Mahmud*] there as He promised him. The first and the last shall praise him (Allah bless him and give him peace), and he will receive the divine opening to begin with praises which, as he was reported to have said in the *Sahih* collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim, “no one else has been given.” In the scriptures of the previous Prophets his *Umma* is called “those given to frequent praise.” Therefore, it is only fitting that be called Muhammad and Ahmad.

These two names have other special qualities and signs of marvel. Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, prevented anyone from being called by these two names before his time (Allah bless him and give him peace), and no one had laid claim to this name before him, lest those who are weak of heart fall prey to doubts and confusion.

The same may be said with respect to the name Muhammad. None of the Arabs or anyone else were called that until it became known shortly before his birth that a prophet would be sent whose name shall be Muhammad. Thereupon, a few Arabs named their sons Muhammad, hoping that one of them would be him, but “Allah knows best where to put His message.” (6:124) Allah Most High prevented those with this name from claiming prophecy, and He prevented others from making that claim on their behalf. No one could lay claim to it or make anyone doubt the Prophet’s claim until the two names were established as his. Then there was no dispute about it.

THE PROPHET’S MANY NAMES (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

Al-Sakhawi said:

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has many names. Some scholars say that they number over a thousand, but most of those names are derived from verbal forms of his descriptions. There is no doubt that the multiplicity of names shows the esteem of the one named, not to mention the honor that Allah conferred upon the Prophet by naming him with some of His own beautiful names and lofty descriptions, as explained [by Qadi ‘Iyad in his] *Shifā*, and others.

I say: The teacher of our teachers, al-Hafiz Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, collected these names in a tract and they reached over five hundred names. I took the key names among them and arranged them, retaining ninety-nine names in the same general order as Allah’s beautiful names:

*This is the beloved, the likes of whom will not be born
He is the light, from whose cheeks one gains illumination;
Jibril called out to him from the pavilion of his beauty
This is the praised one of the cosmos, this is Ahmad!
This is the possessor of comely countenance, this is the Chosen One!
This is the beautiful light, this is the master
This is the one of lovely qualities, this the well-pleased
This is the antimony of the eyes, this the most praiseworthy
This is the one created with fine raiment and precious jewels
Unto him there is no one else resembles or matches him!*

THE PROPHET'S BIRTH IN THE YEAR OF THE ELEPHANT

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born on the Year of the Elephant, as related by al-Tirmidhi in his *Jami'* from the hadith of Qays b. Makhrama b. Ashamm. Al-Bayhaqi also reported this in his [in his *Sunan*] and in *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa* from the hadith of Suwayd b. Ghafra, one of the Mukhdaramis, and this was also reported by al-Hakim who declared it rigorously authentic. Both al-Hakim and al-Bayhaqi reported this from the route of Hajjaj b. Muhammad, from Yunus b. Ishaq, from his father on the authority of Sa'id b. Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbas. Ibn Sa'd related it with the wording, "The Day of the Elephant." Al-Hakim also related this *hadith* from the route of Humayd b. al-Rabi' from Hajjaj and said, "Humayd is alone in his report that calls it the Day of the Elephant." Al-Hakim then followed up with a report from Ibn Ma'in, but the word that is preserved is "Year." It is possible that this latter wording does not negate the former wording, since it is not explicit and there is scope for the possibility

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr said, "It is possible that he meant the day in which Allah prevented the elephants from treading upon the Sacred Precinct and destroyed those who brought them. It is also possible that he meant the year in which it occurred." Al-Sakhawi said, "Our Shaykh inclines to the former view, saying that 'day can

apply to any time, just as it is said “the Day of the Conquest” and “the Day of Badr.” The meaning here is the actual day, so this is more particular than the latter.’ This opinion is also adopted by Ibn Hibban in the beginning of his book of history. He said, “He (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born on the Year of the Elephant on the first day in which Allah sent birds in flocks against the people of the elephants.”

Al-Bayhaqi also related in a *mursal* report from Muhammad b. Mat’am with the wording, “Year...” Three men, Hakim b. Hizam, Huwaytib b. ‘Abd al-’Uzza, and Hassan b. Thabit, were eyewitness to this event, and they all lived over one hundred and twenty years.

Ibrahim b. Mundhir said, “There is no doubt concerning this among any of our scholars.” Those who cite this consensus include Ibn Qutayba and [Qadi] ‘Iyad. Ibn Dihya said, “The scholars’ agreement on this fits with the reports and narrations in the *Sunan*.”

It appears as though these scholars are the reference point for Ibn al-Qayyim’s assertion that there is agreement on this; however, the fact stands that there is a difference of opinion on this issue. The differences have resulted in many variant statements. Some, such as Abu Zakariyya al-’Alaffi, say that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born forty years after the Year of the Elephant—this was mentioned by Ibn ‘Asakir in his biography of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) in beginning of his *Tarikh Dimashq*. Others, such as Musa b. ‘Uqba from Zuhri, say that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born thirty years after the Year of the Elephant. Some say it was twenty years after, as Ibn ‘Asakir mentioned in his narration from Shu’ayb b. Shu’ayb. Others yet still say that he was born fifteen years after the Year of the Elephant. This was mentioned by Ibn al-Kalbi from his father who reported it from Abu Salih from Ibn ‘Abbas. Despite that however, the relied upon position from Ibn ‘Abbas is the aforementioned view. Others say that the Prophet (Allah

bless him and give him peace) was born just one month after the Year of the Elephant. This was mentioned by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr. Others say that he was born just ten days after the event. This was reported by Ibn ‘Asakir from the route of ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abzi. Yet others say that he was born thirty or forty days after the event of the elephants.

WAS THE PROPHET (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)
BORN DURING THE REIGN OF SASSANID EMPEROR
ANUSHIRVAN?

Al-Sakhawi said:

The phrase that is common on the tongues, “I was born during the time of the just emperor [Anushirvan],” is baseless, even though some have sought to trace its source to a hadith collection...Some people were reckless to the point of claiming that “there is no disagreement among the scholars that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born in Mecca during the reign of Emperor Anushirvan the Just...”

I say: Al-Zarkashi stated, “This is a lie and falsehood.” Al-Suyuti quoted al-Bayhaqi who said in *Shu‘ab al-Iman*, “Our Shaykh, Abu ‘Abdullah al-Hafi, spoke about the falsehood of the so-called narration quoted by ignorant people, which states that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) ‘was born during the reign of the Just Emperor’—i.e., Anushirvan. Furthermore, one of the people of righteousness saw the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) in a dream and related to him what Abu ‘Abdullah said, and the Messenger of Allah confirmed him in his assertion that the narration is a lie, and declared it false, saying, ‘I never said that.’”

If you retort, “But a person’s ‘*turba*’ [literally, a person’s origin] is his burial site, that would imply that the Prophet s is buried in Mecca wherein his ‘*turba*’ is found,” the author of ‘*Awarif al-mā’arif* [al-Suhrawardi], may Allah grant us from his mystical sciences and deal kindly with us by his rank, responded by saying: “When the water makes waves, it casts its foam to the furthest reaches; and so the jewel of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) landed in Medina—therefore the Prophet is both Meccan and Medinan: Meccan in his longing, Medinan in his domicile.”

THE PROPHET’S BIRTH IN THE MONTH OF RABI’ AL-AWWAL (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

There are conflicting opinions regarding the month in which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born. The famous position is that he was born in the month of Rabi’ al-Awwal. This is the view of the vast majority of the scholars. Ibn al-Jawzi cited a scholarly agreement on this point, but that is debatable, for others maintained that he (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born in the month of Safar, while others said it was the month of Rabi’ al-Akhir, and some say Rajab, although that is not sound. Some have said that he was born in Ramadan. There is also a report from Ibn ‘Umar with a sound chain that seems to agree with those who say that “the Prophet’s mother carried him in the middle of Dhu al-Hijja [*ayyam al-tashriq*].” Others mentioned an anomalous report that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born on the tenth of Muharram [‘Ashura’]

There are also conflicting opinions about the precise day of the month in which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born. Some say that he was born on an unspecified Monday in Rabi’ al-Awwal, although the majority of scholars maintain that it was a specific day. Some mention two particular Mondays ... Shaykh Qutb al-Din al-Qastalani said, “This is the preferred position of the most of the traditionalists [Ahl al-Hadith] and

it is related from Ibn ‘Abbas and Ibn Jubayr Mat’am. This is the statement of those who are best acquainted with this subject. It is also the preferred view of al-Humaydi and his shaykh Ibn Hazm. Al-Quda’i, in his *‘Uyun al-ma’arif*, relates that this is the consensus of the scholars of hagiography.

Others say that he s was born on the tenth of Dhu al-Hijja, and some say on the twelfth—and indeed, many of the inhabitants of Mecca today go to extremes in their visitations to the sight of the Prophet’s birth. Others say that he was born on the seventeenth and some say he was born sometime in the final eight days of the month. The dominant position, however, is that he was born on Monday, the twelfth of Rabi’ al-Awwal. This is the view of Ibn Ishaq and others.

The scholars also disagree over the precise day in which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born. The dominant position is that he was born on a Monday. Abu Qatada al-Ansari reported that the Prophet s was asked about [his] practice of fasting on Mondays. He s said, “It is the day in which I was born and the day in which I received the prophetic mission.” This was reported by Muslim, and it proves that the Prophet s was born during the day time. In the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad there appears a report from Ibn ‘Abbas who said, “He (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born on Monday, was tasked with the prophetic mission on a Monday, left Mecca to migrate to Medina on a Monday, entered Medina on a Monday, and placed the [Black] Stone [on the Ka’ba] on a Monday.”

Al-Qastalani said, “Likewise, the conquest of Mecca and the revelation of Surat al-Ma’ida both occurred on a Monday. In other words, it was on a Monday when the verse “*Today I have perfected for you your religion and completed for you My favor and choose Islam as your religion*” (5:3) was revealed, and Surat al-Ma’ida was the last chapter revealed. Ibn Abi Shayba and Abu Nu’aym (in his *Dala’il al-Nubuwwa*) reported that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him

peace) was born during the time of the sunrise. It is also said that he was born during the night. Al-Zarkashi said, ‘The sound view is that the Prophet’s birth took place during the day time (Allah bless him and give him peace.”)

Now, al-Qastalani mentioned an oddity and opined that “there are three reasons why the night of his birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) is more virtuous than the Night of Power (*Laylat al-qadr*)...” He went on to mention these reasons, but they do not establish that [the night of the Prophet’s birth is more virtuous] in an absolute sense, especially considering the fact that virtue assigned [to times] is only because the acts worship done therein are superior. This is stated explicitly in the Quran: “*The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.*” (97:3) But this virtue is not acknowledged for the night of the Prophet’s birth, and is found neither in the Book, nor the Sunna, nor from any of the imams and scholars.

TRANSLATOR’S NOTE:

Shaykh Abu ‘Abdullah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Marzuq (Allah have mercy upon him) explicitly declared the night of the Prophet’s birth superior to *Laylat al-Qadr*. In his book *Jana al-jannatayn fi fadl al-laylatayn* he mentioned twenty-one arguments to support his position.

He said:

[I] Honor is identified with exaltation and loftiness, and both of these are relative ascriptions. The honor of each night, therefore, lies in that which has caused them to be honored. When it comes to the night of the Prophet’s birth, it was honored by the nativity of the best of Allah’s creation, Exalted and Sublime is He! With this consideration, it is proven that the night of his birth is superior.

[2] The night of the Prophet's birth is the night when he manifested [to the world] (Allah bless him and give him peace), whereas *Laylat al-Qadr* was given to him, as we explained. Therefore, that which was honored by the appearance of the self of the one endowed honor is nobler than that which appeared because of what was given to him. There is no dispute about this, so it follows that the night of the Prophet's birth is nobler.

[3] *Laylat al-Qadr* is one of the divinely-bestowed gifts of the one (the Prophet), the night of whose birth was honored by innumerable distinctions and bestowals—and that which is honored by one of the unique features of he whose honor is established as absolute cannot surpass the time that was honored with his presence; so it becomes clear, with this consideration, that the night of the Prophet's birth is nobler.

[4] *Laylat al-Qadr* is honored on account of the uniqueness it contains, which—according to the most correct of the two scholarly views—passes after the night is gone, until it returns once more the following year. But the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) is honored by the one whose effects manifested therein and whose lights have forever dazzled each moment in time until the end of the world.

[5] *Laylat al-Qadr* was honored by the descent of the angels, but the night of the Prophet's birth was honored by his appearance (Allah bless him and give him peace). Consequently, and according to the soundest view that inspires confidence, the one who honored the nativity (Allah bless him and give him peace) is superior to the ones who honored *Laylat al-Qadr* (the angels); therefore it follows that the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) is superior.

[6] Superiority denotes a quality by which the superior surpasses the less superior, but both nights, *Laylat al-Qadr* and the night of the nativity, share in the presence of angels who descended in them... however in the night of the nativity there is, in addition to the angels, the appearance of the best of creation (Allah bless him and give him peace), which therefore confers superiority to that night. With this point of consideration, the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) is superior to *Laylat al-Qadr*, regardless of the two contrasting positions concerning which of the two is superior, the angels or the Prophets, upon them prayers and salutations.

[7] *Laylat al-Qadr* was honored by the angels descending and moving from their lofty station to the earth, but the night of the Prophet's birth was honored by the presence and manifestation of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace). The night that is honored by presence and manifestation is more honorable than the night honored by transition of place.

[8] *Laylat al-Qadr* is deemed superior because of the good works that one does within it, so if it is imagined that everyone around the world performs good works that night in order to reach the honor of the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace), their works will not catch up to his works for a single moment, even if those works were performed outside the *Laylat al-Qadr*. Thus it follows that the night of the Prophet's birth is superior.

[9] *Laylat al-Qadr* has been honored because it is gifted to the *Umma* of Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) out of divine concern for him, whereas the night of the Prophet's birth has been honored because of the presence of the one who gifted *Laylat al-Qadr* to his *Umma*, so it is therefore superior.

[10] *Laylat al-Qadr* is deemed superior insofar as it benefits the *Umma* of Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace), but the night of the Prophet's birth is deemed superior insofar as its benefits extend to all of the creation, for Allah sent him as a mercy unto the worlds, as He said: “*And We have sent you naught but as a mercy to the worlds.*” Through him, therefore, bounties reach all of creation, so it follows that the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) is of wider benefit and hence more honored.

[11] The night of the *Mawlid* is deemed superior to the other nights of the year because the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born [in it]. When speaking about it you say: “[It is] the night of the birth of Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace),” and when speaking about *Laylat al-Qadr* you say: “It is the night of *qadr*,” which means honor or apportioning (*taqdir*). The ascription to the night [as being the night of the Prophet's] birth is a specific ascription, which is superior to a general ascription to honor (*mutlaq al-sharaf*). [If it is said that *Laylat al-Qadr* means the night of apportioning] then the apportioning therein is one of the concomitants of its nobility, and so the night of the Prophet's birth is without doubt more general in its nobility, so it follows that the night of the Prophet's birth is superior.

[12] The only one to gain the good fortune of *Laylat al-Qadr* is he who does good works in it, so in that sense the benefit of *Laylat al-Qadr* is limited to the person. But the benefits of the night of the Prophet's birth are spread out; so the night whose benefits are spread out is superior to other nights.

[13] As we have detailed earlier, the virtue of *Laylat al-Qadr* is established, but it is subject to dispute and argumentation, even if the differences about it are weak. On the other hand, the honor of the night of the Prophet's birth is abiding (as we shall soon detail, Allah willing), so it is therefore superior.

[14] Our proof for the assertion that the night of the Prophet's birth is superior is the following: The honor of the time of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) and its ascription to him must be the most superior of times, comparable and analogous to the superiority of the place where he was born, which is deemed the most superior place according to scholarly consensus. In a like manner, the time that was chosen for his birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) must also be the most superior time.

[15] *Laylat al-Qadr* is but a single element or branch of the Prophet's appearance, and a branch can in no way surpass the root; therefore, the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) is superior.

[16] The night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) resulted in the divine outpouring of light that encompassed the world entire and coincided with his appearance (Allah bless him and give him peace). This did not take place save on a night that must be deemed superior, which is what we assert.

[17] On the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) Allah Most High made manifest the secrets of the Prophet's existence (Allah bless him and give him peace): secrets that were connected to the Afterworldly realm and which made realities clear. By him (Allah bless him and give him peace), Allah Most High made clear the distinction between truth and falsehood; through him (Allah bless him and give him peace) Allah Most High manifested the lights of felicity and the path of right guidance in the world; due to him, the party of the Garden and the party of the Hellfire were separated; and by him, Allah exalted the true faith and cast darkness and ignominy upon disbelief, in addition to the many other secrets of Allah's creation. By this line of

reasoning, those of His signs that remain and which are not restricted to a particular night are necessarily superior.

[18] A slightly different way of substantiating this, although similar to the aforementioned, is to say: If the night of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace) is not superior to *Laylat al-Qadr*, one of three things would be implied, all of which are inconceivable. One: that the angels are superior to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace). Two: that actions [performed in *Laylat al-Qadr*] surpass [the Prophet's actions]. Three: that both *Laylat al-Qadr* and the night of the Prophet's birth are equal. All of these are impossible. As for the first, it is inconceivable due to the sound and correct view [that the Prophets are superior to the angels]. As for the second and third, then by scholarly agreement they are impossible. That is to say, the night of the Prophet's birth is superior because he (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born in it, whereas *Laylat al-Qadr* is superior either due to fact that the angels descend during it, or because of the actions performed in it.

[19] [This section is missing from the Arabic original]

[20] A single moment of time in the noble *Mawlid*, namely the moment of the Prophet's birth (Allah bless him and give him peace), is the most superior moment ever, so therefore that single moment is the most virtuous time, and thus superior to *Laylat al-Qadr*.

[21] The most superior of times is the time in which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born, which was, as it were, the Night of Honor (*Laylat al-Qadr*), so there is not time superior to *Laylat al-Qadr* in that sense. This is an inversion of our argument that there is nothing of *Laylat al-Qadr* that is the most superior of times, which invalidates the claim of the opponent.

As for Ibn Dihya's weakening of the narration that mentions the falling star during the Prophet's birth, and his argument that his birth occurred during the day time, it is not a sound argument. That is because the falling star was a type of break with natural phenomenon, and as such there is no difference if it occurred during the night or the day—assuming that by daytime we mean the time after Fajr when stars still appear as they do at night. Alternatively, it can be said that the falling of the star occurred during the night of the Prophet's birth as a means of manifesting his prophecy—for that which comes close to a thing takes its ruling.

THE DISAGREEMENT OF THE SCHOLARS OVER THE LENGTH OF THE PROPHET'S GESTATION AND THE LOCATION OF HIS BIRTH (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

In addition, the scholars have disagreed over the exact length of time the Prophet was carried [in the womb]. Some say it was nine months and others say it was ten, eight, or even seven months. Al-Qastalani said, "The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born in a house belonging to Muhammad b. Yusuf, the brother of al-Hajjaj. Others state that he was born near one of the mountain passages [of Mecca], and some say he was born at al-Radm or 'Asfan. Our Shaykh, Ibn Hajar al-Makki said, "The sound view—nay, the correct view—is that he was born in Mecca, as is well-known today. The scholars stated, 'His birth was not in the month of Muharram, Rajab, or Ramadan, lest it appear that he was honored by being born in a virtuous time. In fact, it was he who honored both times and places.

HIS SUCKLING AND THE PROOFS OF HIS PROPHETHOOD WITH HALIMA AL-SA'DIYYA

Al-Qastalani said:

It is reported that someone said after the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born, “Who will care for this rare jewel, unrivaled in its pricelessness?” Upon hearing this, the birds proclaimed, “We shall care for him and enjoy the privilege of serving him.” The wild beasts proclaimed, “We have more right to care for him and thus honor and exalt him.” Then the tongue of the divine decree called out, “O creation! Indeed, Allah has written in his pre- eternal wisdom that His noble Prophet will suckle from Halima.”

Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Rahawayh, Abu Ya’la, al-Tabarani, al-Bayhaqi, and Abu Nu’aym all report that Halima said, “During the year of drought, I, along with a group of women from Banu Sa’d b. Bakr, came to Mecca in search of nurslings. I went to see a lady from us and was carrying my child. We had with us an old she-camel, and by Allah, it was too old to yield for him even a drop of milk. We remained awake at night listening to my child’s wailing out of hunger, for I had not enough milk in my breast and the she-camel had not enough to give him fill. We soon arrived in Mecca, and I swear by Allah, I know not a single woman [among the wet nurses] except that the Messenger of Allah was presented to them, but they would decline because he was an orphan. By Allah, not a single woman among my friends remained save that she had taken a child to suckle—except me, that is. After failing to find a child to suckle other than him, I said to my husband, ‘By Allah, I hate to return to the company of my friends without a child to suckle. I shall go to that orphan and take him.’ When I went to take him, I found him wrapped up in a woolen garment that was whiter than milk and emitted the fragrance of musk. Under him laid a green

silken cloth. He laid there sleeping on his bedding, so I felt pity for him, and due to his beauty I wished not to wake him up from his sleep. I came close to him, step by step, and placed my hand upon his chest, after which he smiled as if laughing and opened his eyes to look at me. From his eyes there emitted a light that filled the horizons, and as I looked upon him I kissed him between his eyes and gave him my right breast and he drank of my milk as much as he wanted, after which I gave him my left breast, but he refused it—and that was his way from then and onwards.”

The scholars stated that after this, Allah taught him [Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace)] that there is someone else that must share with him, and so he was inspired with justice. Halima said, “So both he and his brother [through nursing] drank to their fill. No sooner had I taken him off my breast when my husband went to our old she-camel and found her udders full of milk. He milked her and drank her milk and I drank with him until we could drink no more. We spent the best of nights and in the morning my husband said to me, ‘By Allah, Halima, it is a blessed creature you have taken. Did you not see the goodness and blessings we enjoyed last night? Since we took him, Allah has continued to increase us in good.’ The people soon bid farewell to each other, and I bid farewell to the Prophet’s mother and mounted my mule mare and held Muhammad in front of me. Soon after mounting my mule mare, I saw that she prostrated herself three times in the direction of the Ka’ba and then raised her head toward the heavens. After that, she began to walk and soon caught up with and outstripped the other riding animals that my travel companions were riding upon. My companions were astonished, and the women behind me asked, ‘O daughter of Abu Dhu’ayb! Is this the same stubborn mule mare that you rode upon the first time?’ I replied, ‘By Allah, this is the same one.’ Astonished, they said, ‘It certainly has a tremendous wonder!’ Soon after that, I heard my mule mare speak and say, ‘Indeed, I have a tremendous wonder: Allah brought

me back to life after my death and put flesh back on my body.' The mule mare then called out the women, 'O womenfolk of Banu Sa'd! You have no idea. Do you know who it is that rides on my back? On my back rests the master of the Messengers, the best of the first and the last, and the beloved of the Lord of the worlds!' ... We later made our way to Banu Sa'd country, and I know of no place on Allah's earth more barren than it, but after we returned we found that our sheep were satiated and full of milk. We milked them and drank, even though others had no drop of milk; and our neighbors would say to their shepherds, 'Go out and graze the flock where the daughter of Abu Dhu'ayb grazed hers.' Yet still their flocks came home yielding not a drop of milk, while mine came satiated and full of milk."

Allah be praised for the blessings and plenty that came upon the flock of Halima. Her flock grew and she grew in prestige because of the Prophet, and she gained weight and continued to enjoy the blessings and happiness and increase [that came as a result of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)]:

*Certainly Halima reached a high station with the Hashimi
Lofty, enjoying the epitome of honor and glory
For her the flock and pasturage increased
Happiness for her and all of Banu Sa'd*

It is mentioned in *Kitab al-tarqis* of Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad b. al-'Ali al-Azdi that Halima sung the following lines as she danced holding the infant Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace):

*O Lord! If you grant him, make it lasting;
Make his station high and exalted
And repudiate the falsehood of the enemies by his right
And increase me, by his right, by his right, by his right*

SOME OF THE PROPHET'S MIRACLES AS A NURSLING (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

Al-Bayhaqi, al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, and Ibn 'Asakir (the latter two in their historical collections) related from al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muttalib who said, "I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! I was called to embrace your religion because of a portent of your prophethood that I saw as you were in the cradle. I saw you speaking gently to the moon, and saw that it moved wherever your fingers moved.' The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, 'I was speaking to it, and it to me, and it was distracting me away from crying as it was prostrating under the Throne.'" Ibn Hajar mentioned in *Fath al-Bari* that it is reported in the *Sira* of al-Waqidi that this event took place when the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was just born. In Ibn Sab'a's *al-Khasa'is* it says that the Prophet's cradle shook due to the immense number of angels around it...

THE CLOUDS THAT SHADED THE PROPHET (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

Al-Bayhaqi and Ibn 'Asakir related from Ibn 'Abbas who said, "Halima mentioned that when she first attempted to wean the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace), he spoke and said, 'Allah is the greatest; all praise belongs to Allah abundantly; and exalted and transcendent is Allah morning and evening.' 'After he matured,' Halima said, 'he went outside and looked at the children playing, but he did not join them.'"

Ibn Sa'd, Abu Nu'aym, and Ibn 'Asakir all related from Ibn 'Abbas who said, "It was Halima's habit that she would not let him [the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)] go far from her sight. One hot afternoon day, however, she was preoccupied and he went out with his sister [from suckling] Shayma' to play with the small sheep. Soon afterwards, Halima went out in search of

him and finally found him along with Shayma'. She asked Shayma', 'How could you go out with him in this heat?' 'Dear mother,' replied Shayma', 'my brother suffered no heat; I saw that clouds hovered over him, stopping where he stopped, and moving where he moved, until we reached this spot here.'"

THE SPLITTING OF THE PROPHET'S BREAST (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

Halima said, "Soon after I weaned him we took him to his mother—even though we were very eager to have him remain with us due to the blessings he brought us—and we spoke to her and said, 'It would be better if you left him to remain with us until he grows larger, as we fear that he may suffer from the plague that has befallen Mecca. We importuned her until she finally agreed and we brought him to our home once more. One day, several months after our return, when he and his brother [from suckling] were behind our tents, his brother came running and called out, 'That Qurayshi brother of mine! Two men clothed in white have taken him and laid him down and opened his breast!' So his father and I went to him and we found him standing, but his face was very pale. We drew him to us and said, 'What is wrong, dear son?' He said, 'Two men clothed in white came to me and laid me down and opened my breast and took out something from it and cast it aside. Then they returned my breast to its previous state.' After returning with him, his father [from suckling] said to me, 'O Halima, I am worried that my son has been afflicted with a spell; take him back to his family before he displays any further symptoms.' We carried him with us until we reached his mother, and she asked, 'What brings you back so soon after being so eager to keep him?' We said, 'We are afraid of a loss or an accident.' Not to be deceived, Amina said, 'Now tell me the real reason. Did you fear that Satan would get to him? By Allah, Satan has no way to get to him. Great and wondrous things are in store for him. Now you shall leave him with me.'"

Having mentioned this, the splitting of the Prophet's breast occurred three times: the first time was recounted here and the second time was with Jibril when revelation was brought to him in the cave of Hira', and the third time was during miraculous night journey.³⁰

THE PASSING OF THE PROPHET'S MOTHER (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

When the Prophet was four years old (and some say he was five or six or seven, or even twelve and a half years old) his mother passed away in Abwa', which is a region that lies between Mecca and Medina. Some say that she passed away in a mountain pass in Jahun. In the dictionary *al-Qamus al-muhit* it states under the entry "Dar Nabigha": "A place near Mecca wherein lies the Prophet's mother (Allah bless him and give him peace)."



Photo © (unknown)

FIG. 5. The Grave of Amina (Allah be pleased with her)

³⁰ The opening of the Prophet's blessed chest (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was to add purity upon purity, not, as some believe, to remove something impure or evil from him. The knower of Allah Habib 'Ali al-Habshi said in some poetry:

*The angels removed no blemish from his heart;
They only increased the purity already with him!*

Ibn Sa'd related from Ibn 'Abbas, from al-Zuhri, from 'Asim b. 'Umar b. Qatada (whose reports are intertwined), all of whom said, "When the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) was six years of age, his mother went with him for a one month visit of his maternal aunts from Banu' Adi b. al-Najjar in Medina. As he recounted to us the events that he experienced, the Prophet looked at one of the homes and said, 'This is where my mother took me when we disembarked. I was at the well of Banu 'Adi b. al-Najjar and there stood a folk from the Jews who were looking at me.' Umm Ayman said, 'I heard one of them say, "He is the Prophet of this nation and this is the abode of his migration." I understood what they were saying, so I embarked to take the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) back to his mother in Mecca, but she passed away at Abwa'.'"

Al-Hafiz Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti declared in no uncertain terms that the Prophet's parents are saved, but the position of the majority [of scholars] is contrary to that. I have detailed this issue in my separate treatise on the topic.³¹

Umm Ayman [mentioned in this report] is none other than Baraka, who cared for the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) after the passing of his mother. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) used to say to her, "You are my second mother."

³¹ In Mulla 'Ali al-Qari's commentary on the *Shifa*, one of his later works, he seems to have changed his opinion on this issue. He said, "As for the religion of the parents of Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) there are many opinions. The most correct one is that they were believers according to the consensus of the greatest of the scholars, mentioned by al-Suyuti in his three books." Allah knows best.

THE PASSING OF HIS GRANDFATHER 'ABD AL-MUTTALIB

His grandfather 'Abd al-Muttalib passed away at the age of eighty, having held on to the religion of the pre-Islamic period of ignorance. Some say that he passed away when the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was nine years old, while some say ten or six years old. His grandfather at the time was one hundred and ten years old, although others say he was one hundred and forty. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was later cared for by Abu Talib, whose name was 'Abd Manaf, and 'Abd al-Muttalib ordered Abu Talib to care for him since he was the close brother of 'Abdullah.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:

The strongest view among scholars is that 'Abd al-Muttalib was a believer. Broadly speaking, there are three opinions regarding 'Abd al-Muttalib, as mentioned by al-Suyuti:

1. That the call of Islam did not reach him and is therefore among the *Ahl al-Fatra*, those who were alive between the prophetic missions of 'Isa and the Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace).
2. That he was among the *Hanifs* who clung to the way of Prophet Ibrahim (upon whom be peace) and did not worship idols.
3. That Allah brought him back to life after the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was tasked with the message and the Prophet called him to Islam, which he then accepted and died once again. This is the weakest of the three opinions since there is no textual proof that supports it.

Among the proofs that 'Abd al-Muttalib was a believer and not an idol-worshipper are the narrations cited above in which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) speaks of how

he hailed from pure loins, unsullied by either fornication or idol-worship. Furthermore, ‘Abd al-Muttalib refused the pagan practice of divination through arrows and instead drew lots. Allah also honored him with a true dream revealing to him the source of a treasure of Zamzam, and gave him a life-saving miracle, both of which have been narrated by Muhammad b. Ishaq al-Fakihi *Akhbar Makka* with a fully connected chain of transmission. He said, “It is reported on the authority of Yazid b. Abi Habib al-Misri, on the authority of Marthad b. ‘Abdullah al-Yazani, on the authority of ‘Abdullah b. Zubayr al-Ghafiqi, who said that he heard ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (Allah be pleased with him) narrate the story of the well of Zamzam, when ‘Abd al-Muttalib was instructed to dig it up. ‘Ali said: “‘Abd al-Muttalib said: “I was sleeping in the Hijr [in the Ka’ba] when a figure came to me and said: ‘Dig purity.’ ‘What is purity?’ I asked, but the figure vanished so I went back to sleep. The next night the figure appeared to me once again and said: ‘Dig beneficence.’ ‘What is beneficence?’ I asked, but the figure vanished. The next night the figure appeared once more and said: ‘Dig Zamzam.’ ‘What is Zamzam?’ I asked. The figure replied: ‘It shall never dry up or become scarce, and it shall provide drink to the pilgrims on the greatest pilgrimage. It lies in a place where there is dung, blood, pecking ravens, and an ants’ nest.’” When the status of the well and its location became clear to ‘Abd al-Muttalib, and he realized that the figure spoke the truth, he took his pickaxe and brought with him al-Harith b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib, who was his only son. When he eventually struck the well-stone covering and shouted Allah’s praises, Quraysh realized that he found what he was looking for, so they stood up and said: “O ‘Abd al-Muttalib! This is our inheritance from our father Isma’il and we have a right to share in it, so give us our share!” But ‘Abd al-Muttalib refused, saying: “No! I have been chosen with this to exclusion of all of you, and have been granted it alone.” Quraysh replied: “Deal with us fairly, for we won’t leave you until

we seek a judgment regarding it!” ‘Abd al-Muttalib replied: “Place between you and me anyone you wish; I will plead my case against you before the diviners of Banu Sa’d b. Hudhaym!” Pleased with this arrangement, Quraysh agreed and said: “Yes.” Banu Sa’d b. Hudhaym were with noblemen in the Levant, so ‘Abd al-Muttalib and a group of his cousins from Banu ‘Abd Manaf and a small group from every tribe set out on a journey to the Levant. During that time the route was through a desert wasteland, and when they reached an area situated between the Hejaz and the Levant, ‘Abd al-Muttalib and his companions ran out of water and suffered intense thirst—so intense in fact that they were certain of death. At that moment they asked some of the tribesmen of Quraysh for drink, but they refused, saying: “We are in a wasteland and afraid for our own survival lest we share your fate.” After seeing the response of the folk, ‘Abd al-Muttalib feared for himself and his companions and asked, “What do you think we should do?” “We see no course of action save to follow your view,” they replied, “so command us as you wish.” ‘Abd al-Muttalib said: “I think each man among you should dig a hole for himself using his remaining strength, and each man who dies should be buried by his companions inside the hole he dug and covered up, until the very last man among you is left, for the loss of one man is easier to bear than the loss of an entire caravan.” His compatriots said: “This is a good idea,” and each man proceeded to dig a hole for himself and sit inside of it, awaiting death due to dehydration. After some time had passed ‘Abd al-Muttalib said: “By Allah, it will be our failure if we cast ourselves into destruction without attempting to travel further and seek drink, for perhaps Allah will provide us with water further ahead. Let us move on.” As they mounted their steeds preparing to set off, the tribesmen of Quraysh looked on at them, seeing what they were doing, and when ‘Abd al-Muttalib came forward and mounted his steed, he bid it move and as it did, suddenly a spring of fresh water gushed out from underneath it,

whereupon 'Abd al-Muttalib and his travel companions cried out in thanks to Allah and descended from their mounts and drank of the water and gave it to their animals until they were quenched. Then 'Abd al-Muttalib invited the tribesmen of Quraysh to drink, saying: "Come and take drink that Allah has provided us!" And so they drank and gave drink to their animals and said: "By Allah, the judgment has been decided in your favor, 'Abd al-Muttalib! By Allah, we will never contend with you over the well of Zamzam, for the one who gave you drink of this water here in this waste-land is the one who gave you drink of Zamzam. Return to your well." He and they returned and never reached the diviners, and Quraysh left 'Abd al-Muttalib to care for the well."

THE MESSENGER'S JOURNEY TO THE LEVANT (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE)

When the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) was twelve years old, he traveled with his uncle Abu Talib on a journey to the Levant. When they reached Bostra, the Prophet encountered Bahira the Monk. Bahira's real name was Jarjis. When the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and his uncle arrived in Bostra, Bahira recognized the Prophet by his description and said to him as he took him by the hand, "This is the master of the creation. Allah has sent this one as a mercy unto the worlds." When asked how he knew that, Bahira replied, "When you rose from the valley there was not a single tree or stone save that it fell prostrate before him—and they do not prostrate to any save a Prophet. I also recognize him by the Seal of Prophecy that lies between his shoulder blades like an apple, and indeed that is how we find the [final Prophet] described in our Scriptures." Bahira asked Abu Talib to bring Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) [back to Mecca] for fear of the Jews. This was reported by Ibn Abi Shayba, and further in the report it mentions

that the clouds covered the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace). May Allah aid the one who said:

*If they say one day, “He was covered by the clouds.”
We say, “Indeed it was they who were covered!”*

Ibn Manda related with a weak chain from Ibn ‘Abbas that when Abu Bakr al-Siddiq was eighteen years old he accompanied the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) who was twenty at the time, and they set out for the Levant to engage in trade. Along the way they disembarked and the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) sat under the shade of a lotus tree³² while Abu Bakr went to a local monk named Bahira and asked him a question. Bahira asked, “Who is that man who sits under the shade of the tree?” Abu Bakr replied, “That is Muhammad b. ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib.” Bahira said, “By Allah, he is a Prophet; no one after ‘Isa has sought shade under that tree save Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace).” Bahira’s words entered Abu Bakr al-Siddiq’s heart and when the Prophet was tasked to deliver the message he immediately followed him. Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani said in *al-Isaba*, “If this story is true it is a separate journey from the one taken with Abu Talib.”

³² It is apparent that the tree was actually a pistachio tree and not a lotus tree.



FIG. 6. The tree under which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) sat

THE PROPHET'S (ALLAH BLESS HIM AND GIVE HIM PEACE) MARRIAGE TO KHADIJA

Then the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)—who was twenty-five at the time—traveled with Maysara, the servant boy of Khadija b. Khuwaylid b. Asad, to conduct trade [in the Levant]. When they reached the market of Bostra the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) disembarked under a tree near the cell of one Nastur the Monk. No one had taken shade under that tree save a Prophet. And in one narration of this it says, “No one after ‘Isa had taken shade under this tree.” During their journey in the caravan, Maysara beheld two angels providing shade from the sun. When they returned to Mecca during the mid-afternoon, Khadija was in one of her upper rooms and saw the Messenger of Allah approaching on a camel while two angels provided him shade. This was related by Abu Nu’aym.

Two months and twenty-five days after this incident (and some say that was in the year 21 or 30 [i.e., twenty-one or thirty years

since the Year of the Elephant]), the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) married Khadija. In the pre-Islamic period of ignorance (*jahiliyya*), Khadija was called al-Tahira (the Pure One). Early on she was married to Abu Hala b. Zarara al-Tamimi, and she bore him Hind and Hala, both of whom were males. Later she was married to 'Atiq b. 'Abid al-Makhzumi, and she bore him another Hind. When she married the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) she was forty years of age. It was she who offered herself in marriage to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace). He informed his uncles about this and of them, his uncle Hamza, went with him and met Khuwaylid b. Asad and the Prophet expressed to him his interest to marry Khadija. He then married her and gifted to her twenty heads of cattle. During the marriage, Abu Bakr and the heads of Mudar attended, and Abu Talib addressed the crowd, saying, "All praise belongs to Allah who made us from the progeny of Ibrahim, the seed of Isma'il, and the roots of Ma'add and Mudar; who made us the custodians of His House and the borders of His sacred precinct; who provided us a Sacred House of security to which pilgrimage is performed; and who made us rulers over the people. To proceed: No other man can measure up to this nephew of mine, Muhammad b. 'Abdullah. His wealth might be little, but wealth is a fading shadow and passing thing. You all know Muhammad's kin, and he has sought the hand of Khadija b. Khuwaylid in marriage and given her—and shall give her—such-and-such amount of wealth from my wealth. By Allah, he has a tremendous stature and rank."

After this the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) married Khadija. When the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was thirty-five years of age, Quraysh were worried that the walls of the Ka'ba would fall due to floods, so they called for the strongest man among the clients of Sa'd b. al-'As to rebuild its sacred walls. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was present as it was being rebuilt, and he carried stones for them.

In this process, they would take their loin cloths and hold them over their shoulders to carry the stones (thus exposing their nakedness). Just as the Messenger of Allah was about to do the same, he suddenly fell down and heard a caller say, “Your private area!”—and this was the first time he was called. Abu Talib or ‘Abbas said to him, “Dear nephew! Put your loin cloth over your head!” But the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “The only reason I fell was because of nakedness.”

THE BEGINNING OF REVELATION

Allah tasked the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) with the prophetic mission and made him a mercy unto the worlds and sent him as a Messenger to mankind and jinn when he reached forty years of age. Some say it was when he was forty years and one day, and others say forty years and ten days or forty years and two months. It began on Monday, the 27th of Ramadan; some say on the 23rd or the 24th. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr says that it began on Monday the 8th of Rabi’ al-Awwal in the year 41 [after his birth].

Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, and others relate from Qatada who said regarding the verse “*Certainly, there has come to you a Messenger from your own selves...*”: “Allah made him from your own selves, so envy him not for what Allah has given him of prophecy and miracles; it ‘is grievous to him that you should suffer’ that is, he cares deeply for the misguided and hopes that Allah will guide him.”

Ibn Abi Hatim and Abu al-Shaykh both relate from Ibn ‘Abbas who said regarding the verse “*it is grievous to him that you should suffer*”: “This means, your sufferings weigh heavily upon him, and he is eager for the disbelievers among you to believe.”

CONCLUSION

The upshot is that the verse “*grievous to him that you suffer*” means that he finds it difficult and heavy upon him that you experience suffering and fatigue. This is why—due to his blessings—the sins of mistakes, forgetfulness, and acts done under compulsion are lifted from you, and this is why the burdens and fetters that were on the previous nations have been removed from you. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) brought the upright, moderate religion, and the illumined, well-pleasing path.

It is also possible that the word “*grievous*” is separate from the phrase that proceeds it and connected to what comes after it. In that case it is an attribute of the Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) and means essentially that “his existence is valuable and rare, and his generosity is perfect and his august beauty is radiant, and he is unrivaled and honored by Allah—so honor and exalt him, and assist him and magnify his status.” This position is supported by the anomalous variant reading of the verse in which it is pronounced with two *zays*: “*that you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that you exalt him [tu'azzizuhu]*.”³³ Alternatively this can mean he is superior to the other Messengers since he is the Seal of the Prophets, or because his religion is dominant over the other religions and inclusive of all times and places, and he takes vengeance upon his enemies just as he shows mercy to those he loves.

The verse “*that you suffer*” means that it grieves him when you suffer harm and it is heavy upon him when you go through trials, for he is the mercy unto the worlds and takes pity on the believers. The verse “*eager for you*” means that he is eager for your faith, certitude, and spiritual beauty. And for the believers he is especially full of pity and mercy; he personifies mercy, care, subtle kindness, and mercy.

³³ That is, instead of the canonical reading: *wa tu'azziruhu*.

Ibn Abi Hatim related from 'Ikrima who said that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Jibril came and said, 'O Muhammad! Indeed, your Lord greets you. Here is the angel in charge of the mountains. Allah has sent him to you and ordered him to do nothing unless it is by your command.' The angel in charge of the mountains said to him, 'Indeed, Allah has ordered me to do nothing unless it is by your command. If you wish, I will take the mountains and crush them [the people of Taif] in between them, or if you wish I will rain down stones upon them, or if you wish the earth will swallow them up.' The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) replied, 'O angel of the mountains! I come to them so that perhaps someone from their offspring says there is no god but Allah.' The angel of the mountains said, 'You are as your Lord has named you: Full of Pity, Merciful.'"

Ibn Mardawayh related from Abu Salih al-Hanafi who said, "Abdullah [Ibn 'Abbas] reported that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, 'Indeed, Allah is Merciful, and He does not place His mercy except with one who is merciful.' We said, 'O Messenger of Allah! But all of us show mercy to our belongings and children.' The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) replied, 'That is not the mercy I speak of; rather, it is as Allah said, "*Certainly, there has come to you a Messenger from your own selves. It is grievous to him that you should suffer and he is eager for you and full of pity and mercy to the believers.*"'"

This *hadith* indicates that mercy should be both general and restricted, as the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said in other *hadith* reports, such as the rigorously authentic report: "None of you truly believe until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself," and the other rigorously authentic report: "Those who show mercy shall receive mercy from the All-Merciful.

Show mercy with those on the earth, and the Lord of the heavens shall show mercy to you.”³⁴

The verse “*so if they turn away*” means: If the disbelievers turn away from faith in you, or if all of creation turn away and refuse to follow you, say to them, “*Allah is sufficient for me...*” That is, He is enough for me in all of my affairs, “*there is no god but Him...*” That is, there is no Lord but Him, so only He merits worship. “*Upon Him I put my trust*”: upon Him I rely completely, “*and He is the Lord of the Magnificent Throne.*” The word Magnificent is in the genitive state since it is an adjective of the Throne. It has also been recited in the nominative state as an adjective of Lord (i.e., the Magnificent Lord). According to the former reading, this describes the immense shape of the Throne that encompasses all of creation. It is related that the seven earths, when compared to the size of the heavens of this world, are like a ring thrown into a desert. Despite that, it has been reported in a *hadith qudsi*, “My earth and heavens cannot contain me, but the heart of My believing servant can contain Me.”³⁵ Abu Dawud reported from Abu al-Darda’ with a raised chain, as did Ibn al-Sunni, that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “Whoever says seven times upon waking and entering the evening, ‘Allah is sufficient for me, there is no god but Him, upon Him I put my trust and He is the Lord of the Magnificent Throne,’ Allah shall suffice him from all that worries him in his worldly and Afterworldly affairs.”

Ibn Abi Shayba and others related from Ibn ‘Abbas from Ubayy b. Ka’b who said, “The last verse revealed to the Prophet was “*Certainly, there has come to you a Messenger from your own selves...*” In another narration Ubayy said, “This is the last portion of the Quran to be revealed, and the matter was closed with what started

³⁴ Recorded by Abu Dawud.

³⁵ Recorded by al-Ghazali in his *Ihya’*. Al-‘Iraqi stated in *al-Mughni ‘an haml al-asfar fi al-asfar*, “I have found no basis for it.”

it, which is ‘there is no god but Allah.’ Allah said, “*And We have not sent a Messenger before you save that We revealed to him, ‘there is no god but me, so worship Me alone.’*” (21:25)

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So we too shall conclude with what Allah concluded with when He revealed His clear words to the Seal of the Prophets (Allah bless him and give him peace). Thus we hope to receive a goodly end and attain unto the lofty station out of Allah’s grace and bounty; to be with those whom Allah has graced from the Prophets, the veracious, the martyrs, and the righteous—and what a good company they are! That is Allah’s bounty, and sufficient is Allah as a Knower.

All praise belongs to Allah in the beginning and the end, outwardly and inwardly, contingently and pre-eternally. And may Allah send prayers, salutations and increased honor, nobility, and exaltation upon our master Muhammad.

Amin.

